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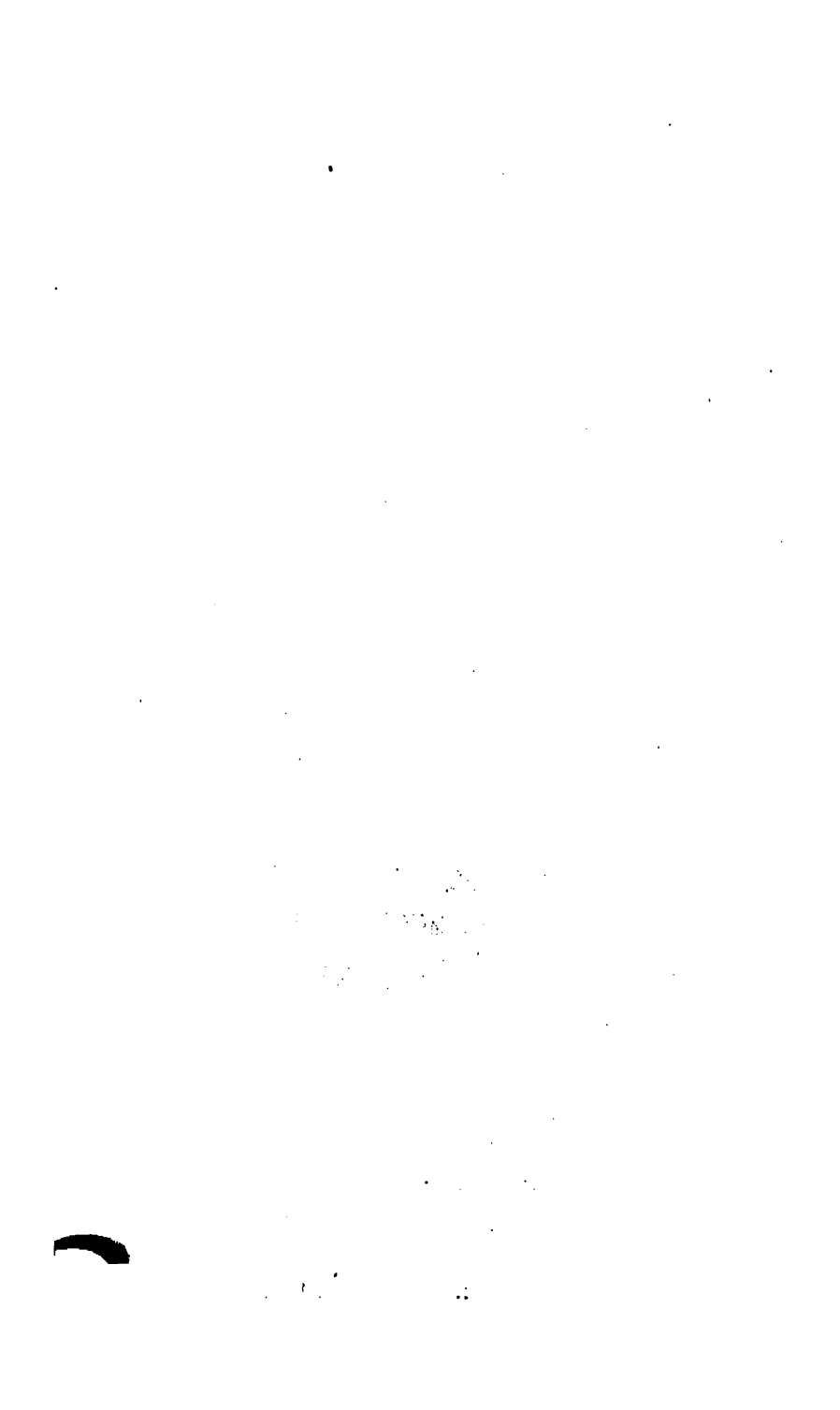
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SHAMROCKS





A
BUNCH OF SHAMROCKS.

BEING

A Collection of Irish Tales and Sketches.

BY

E. OWENS BLACKBURNE,

*Author of "Illustrious Irishwomen," "A Woman Scorned," "Molly
Carew," &c., &c.*



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DEDICATED TO
MY GOD-DAUGHTER,
NORAH IVATTS.

LONDON, 1879.



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A BUNCH OF SHAMROCKS.

BIDDY BRADY'S BANSHEE.

“ARRAH, thin!—an’ did yeh nivir hear tell av ‘Biddy Brady’s Banshee?’ Shure, iviry wan for three parishes roun’ was talkin’ about it! Bedad, it was th’ grandest piece av fun ivir happened in th’ place, and only jist t’ mintion it t’ ould Biddy Brady is like shakin’ a red rag at a bull! It’s she that gets mad av yeh ask her av she ivir seen a banshee!

“Yis! alannah machree, I’ll tell yeh the story. Shure no wan knows it betther nor meself, for wasn’t I there th’ day Father Connor found out all about it, so here it’s for yeh!

“Well—four years ago whin ould Paddy Brady was dyin’—he died av an indigestion av th’ lung, ma’am—at laist, that’s what th’

docthor sed, but ould Rosy Finnegan, that's a very knowledgable ould woman, sez that it wasn't that at all, but a demur* in his back, or aither that or a fallin' av his breast-bone, an' sure it's as like as not that Rosy was right, for sure she's been raisin' breast-bones for th' last thirty years.† An' th' sorra much docthors knows afther all! Throth, ma'am, it's my belief, an' Biddy Brady's too, that poor Paddy—God rest his sowl this blessed day!—'ud be here alive an' hearty now, av th' docthor had only let ould Rosy Finnegan clap a plaster av ivy laves an' goose-grace an th' small av his back! But no! bedad! Docthor Joyce wouldn't, an' so among them poor Paddy Brady was kilt all out!

“ Ah! Yis. Th' docthors, wid ther new-fangled ways, don't like people t' be cured so aisy. That's about th' thruth av it; but,

* “Demur” in the back—i.e., lumbago.

† “Falling of the breastbone.” This imaginary complaint is cured in the following manner:—Some oil is burnt in a cup, and the air exhausted, and the upturned cup placed over the region of the heart, whilst the operator mutters some prayers. Not long ago a man died in the North of Ireland who had amassed a considerable sum of money by “raising the breastbone.”

faix ! it's many and many's th' fine cure I seen done an a sore eye wid th' nine blessed dawks from th' whitethorn be th' Holy Well there beyant pinte at it, in th' name av th' Blessed Thrinity ! Ay, faix ! many's th' wan ; an' many's th' child bewitched be th' fairies, and wastin' away, that I seen th' charm bruk be feedin' the crathur wid milk from goats that fed an' a fairy mountain. But there's no use in tellin' that t' th' docthors ; they're too consaited, an' consait's a bad thing in any dacint Christian, lettin' alone docthors.

“ Och ! Here I am now discoorsin' out av me—but, shure ! it's no wondher, for it's not iviry day I get a lady like yerself t' listen t' me—an' I'm forgettin', all about ould Biddy Brady's banshee ! Well, I was tellin' yeh, ma'am, that ould Paddy Brady—the heavens be his bed this blessed day, for th' sorra dacinter nabour ivir dhrew th' breath av life, though I'm his mother's third-cousin that sez it !—yis, ould Paddy Brady died, lavin' Biddy wid av fine big lump av a boy av nineteen. He was six fut high, wid a fine healthy face

as roun' an' as red as th' sun in a fog an th' top av th' mountain over there, an' a fine thick head av carroty hair an him. I dunno whether yeh know it or not, ma'am, but ould Biddy and Paddy nivir had but th' wan child—boy nor girl, nor any soort—an' shure, what d'ye think but Biddy always kep gom-mochin' afther him, an' thratin' him like a child, and he nineteen years av age!

“I was at poor ould Paddy's wake—his sowl to glory—an' Biddy was sittin' in th' middle av the flure, wid her cloak on, an' a little new shawl pinned over her cap, an' a white pockethandkercher in her hand, an' she rockin' herself backwards and forwards, an' she takin' up th' keen now an' agin. Now I don't care much for ould Biddy Brady, but I'll say this much for her, ma'am, that a nicer-behaved woman at a husband's wake I nivir seen. The corpse, too, was laid out beautiful. It was waked in the kitchen, and bekase th' bed was fixed in th' wall av the room Tom Doolan, th' boccaty* carpenther, lint two

* Lame.

nine-feet planks, that wor covered wid sheets, an' did beautiful, an' th' inds av them that stuck out med sates for some av the nabours. Ay, indeed, an' it was on that very sate that Christy Brady, ould Biddy's son, ma'am, was sittin' beside Judy Blake, not that he was givin' her much discoorse; he was too well behaved t' talk much at his ould father's wake; that wouldn't be right behaviour.

"'Biddy, acushla,' sez I to her, 'it's you that ought t' be th' proud woman, t' have such a fine boy as Christy t' look afther th' bit av land for yeh.'

"'Yis, Peggy darlint, so I am,' sez she, fouldin' up her pockethandkercher jist like a lady, an' sittin' up very straight, 'but I'm thinkin' it's not this dirty bit av land that Christy'll be mindin'!'

"'Arrah, no?' sez I, an' we all looked at her.

"'Bekase,' sez she, tuckin' her cloak roun' her, as grand as yeh plaze, 'Christy's goin' t' be a gintleman, he's goin' t' be a priest! I can tell yez all we're not th' common soort av people yez always thought we war.'

“‘Och ! poor ould Biddy,’ sez Rosy Finnegan t’ me in a whisper, ‘she was always quare, but she’s goin’ aff av her head intirely wid the loss av poor ould Paddy.’

“‘Throth, Biddy,’ sez Tom Doolan, that lint th’ planks, ‘no wan in th’ parish cud ivir even anythin’ t’ you or yours but th’ hoighth av dacincy an’ behaviour.’

“‘We’ve more nor behaviour, I can tell yeh, Tom Doolan,’ sez ould Biddy, wid a shake av her head, ‘it’s grandheur we have. It’s a banshee we have follyin’ th’ family. Take that now !’

“‘It’s as throe as you’re sittin’ there, Tom,’ sez Christy, all av a suddint from the corner, ‘me and me mother and me poor father—God rest his sowl—heard it three nights runnin’ afore me father died.’

“‘Bedad he did,’ sez Biddy; ‘the first night I heerd it I thought I heerd somethin’ scrapin’ or tappin’ at th’ windy, so I wint over an’ opened it, an’ there, in th’ light av the moon I seen a little ould woman dhressed all in red. Well, th’ minit she seen me she

gev a schreech an' run away down by th' boreen. "Christy, alannah," sez I, "it's a banshee." "Thru for you, mother," sez he, "so it is," an' wid that he run out afther it, an' was a good two hours lookin' about, but th' sorra bit av it he cud see.'

"'An' did ye see it agin, Biddy?' sez Tom Doolan.

"'Yis, aghra, yis,' sez Biddy Brady, 'twict it kem an' gev th' same schreech. So I med Christy rub his fingers wid a bit av the blessed candle, an' gev him the holy wather to sprinkle her wid—but not a bit av her cud he find.'

"'Bedad I'll ketch her yet,' sez Christy, 'av anywan does. I'm detarmined not t' have her comin' and disturbin' me pace a'thout knowin' th' raison why.'

"'Arrah, Christy,' sez ould Rosy Finnegan, 'shure it's aisy seein' what brought th' banshee—shure it kem for yer poor father, God be good t' him. But bedad, Biddy, it's a great day for yeh t' have a banshee followin' th' family.'

“ ‘It’s only people whose aunt’s sisthers wor kings and queens, that does have ban-shees in th’ family,’ sez Tom Doolan; and mind yeh, m’am, Tom has a power av larnin’, and can say Latin again’ Father Connor, for Tom wanst used to sarve Mass; ‘but I don’t rimimber,’ sez he, ‘any king av the name av Brady, nor a queen nayther. There was a King O’Tool, that was made into a church be raison iv a charm St. Kevin put an him; an’ there was the Queen av Sheeby—but I’m not right shure that she was pure Irish.’

“ ‘Not she,’ sez Pat Gaffney, ‘she cudn’t be more than half Irish. Sure “sheeby” is only th’ half av “shebeen.” ’

“ ‘Throth, yer right there, Pat,’ sez Tom Doolan; ‘but let me think—there was King Solomon.’

“ ‘No, asthore machree, no,’ sez Biddy Brady. ‘It wasn’t King Solomon, for I wanst heerd Father O’Connor tell that he wanted t’ cut a baby in two halves, an’ th’ nerra a dacint Brady id ivir think av doin’ such an onchristian thing. No, agrah, it wasn’t

King Solomon that was th' first av th' Bradys.'

" 'I know who it was,' sez Pat Gaffney; 'it was Brian Boru. Shure, Brian Boru and Brady is as like as two pays.'

" 'Holy Saint Dinnis! look at th' corpse!' screeches out Rosy Finnegan; 'it's risin' up from th' dead t' say that it's thrue about Brian Boru!'

" Faix, ma'am, we all schreeched, an' no wondher, for th' corpse stood up nearly sthraight, an' med a dash out at poor ould Biddy that was sittin', as I tould yeh, ma'am, right in the middle av th' flure.

" But, shure, it didn't come t' life at all; it was only Christy Brady an' little Judy Blake that laned too heavy on the ind av th' plank th' wor sittin' on, an' thin th' other ind wint up an' threwn out th' corpse.

" Well, ma'am, poor ould Paddy Brady—God rest his sowl—was berried th' next Sunday—that was th' next day—an' poor ould Biddy was near half dead from not gettin' over th' fright av the corpse flyin' at her.

“ ‘Throth, I’m afeard,’ sez she, ‘that it’s wantin’ th’ rites I’ll be meself afore long; an’ maybe it’s a saucer av snuff an me buzzom an’ two mould candles at me head ye’ll see afore th’ year is out. It was a mortial bad sign for th’ corpse t’ make a grab at me.’

“ ‘Well,’ sez I, ‘there’s some thruth in that. An’ are ye in airnest, Biddy, about makin’ Christy a priest?’

“ ‘Och, bedad I am, he’s a gintleman born; I know that from the banshee, the Lord betchune uz an’ all harm. So he must be eddicated like wan.’

“ ‘About a fortnight afther ould Paddy was berried, I was doin’ a bit av washin’ wan day, whin who comes in but ould Biddy Brady.

“ ‘God save yeh, kindly,’ sez she, comin’ in.

“ ‘Amin; th’ same t’ you, Biddy,’ sez I; ‘yer welcome, acushla! sit down.’

“ ‘Peggy,’ sez she, an’ she sittin’ an the settle-bed be th’ side av th’ harth, ‘I’m in desp’rate throuble intirely.’

“ ‘Arrah, what about,’ sez I, ‘shure it’s not about poor Paddy—God be good t’ him—

for he always minded his duty an' confession, an' ye have that little red heifer t' give Father Connor for masses for his sowl.'

" 'No, Peggy, it's not about Paddy—God rest him—I'm aisy in me mind about him, for a red heifer is as much as cud be expected from a poor widda woman, an' I'm thinkin' maybe they'll throw in th' good blood av th' Bradys. But it's about the banshee.'

" 'Saints above!' sez I, 'an' did it come agin?'

" 'Come!' she sez, 'och! bedad it did! Nine times it kem, and nine times Christy follied it wid the holy wather, but th' sorra bit cud he ketch it.'

" 'Bedad! it's quare all out,' sez I.

" 'Begorra, it is!' sez she; 'so I jist wint up an' towld Father Connor about it—it's he that's the dacint priest!—an' t' night, Peggy, he's goin' t' watch an' see if he can't say a charm agin t' banshee. An' I'm not t' tell Christy,' he sez; 'an' I want yeh t' come up an' be there, Peggy, acushla, av it comes.'

" 'Troth, I will,' sez I.

“ ‘An’ what d’ye think,’ sez she, ‘but Christy, that I hardly ivir let out av me sight an’ was rarin’ up t’ be a credit t’ th’ blood av th’ Bradys, he sez now that he won’t be a priest, but that he’ll git marrid ! Troth ! me hart’s near bruk between him an’ th’ banshee, only it’s such a dacint thing t’ have in th’ family.’

“ Well, ma’am, I wint up t’ ould Biddy Brady’s that evenin’, and it was a Christmas Eve. Christy was there, an’ he not knowin’ a word about Father Connor. We had some punch, and th’ sorra word we sed about the banshee. Meself was thinkin’ it wasn’t comin’ at all ; or that, maybe, the nine times was th’ charm ; a’ that somewan was t’ die afther that—whin, all av a suddint, me blood run cowl’d wid hearin’ a schreech roun’ be th’ boreen ! Ould Biddy got all av a thrimble, an’ began sayin’ her bades as fast as she cud, for there was schreech after schreech until th’ kem t’ th’ very doore.

“ ‘Gi’ me the holy wather, mother !’ sez Christy, takin’ it an’ makin’ a run at the

doore. But jist as he opened it, who walks in but Father Connor an' little Judy Blake.

“Och ! bedad ! it's thrue as yer there, ma'am. It niver was a banshee at all ; only little Judy Blake, wid her mother's ould red cloak roun' her, an' her arms all bare an' white. An' th' whole raison av it was that Biddy Brady kep such a sharp eye after her big lump av a son that he had no other way av coortin' Judy Blake. So he tould Father Connor afore us all, an' Father Connor gave thim a sermon about frightenin' people.

“‘Och ! yer rivirence ! an' isn't it too bad,’ sez Biddy, ‘an he cut out for a priest ! He looks that ginteel av a Sunda’ whin he’s shaved an’ has his clane shirt an, that he looks th’ very moral av yerself, yer rivirence !’

“‘No, Biddy,’ sez his rivirence ; ‘I don’t think that Christy’s cut out for a priest. Shure a priest ’ud niver think av runnin’ afther th’ girls.’

“‘Thrue, for yer rivirence,’ sez Biddy.

“‘Now, Biddy,’ sez Father Connor, ‘yeh must make it up wid th’ two young people,

for at this blessed Christmas time yeh must forgive and forgit ?'

"So, ma'am, there was a great laugh at them all in th' chapel-yard, afther Mass on Christmas Day. An' at last Biddy used t' get mad whin anythin' was sed, for shure she didn't like t' be chated out av her grandheur. But no wan in th' parish can help laughin' whin anywan talks about 'Biddy Brady's Banshee.' "

THE PRIEST'S BOY.

CHAPTER I.

It's no lie t' say Owney McGurk, of Kils-
cadden, was always a dacint, honest man, an'
a good nabour, an' as for Mrs. McGurk, why,
wasn't she wan of ould Phil Delaney's
daughters, from beyant the mountains over
there? An' that's sayin' enough, so yeh see
there was good blood an both sides. It was
the sin o' the world whin their fine sthrappin'
boy, Tim, was sint beyant the says for thryin'
t' do a little 'bit ov distillin' unbeknownst.
But, as all the nabours sed, an' shure they
had a betther right t' know the ins an' outs
av it than thim murtherin lawyers, it was
thim that condimned Tim that disarved high
hangin', for he was as dacint an' clane a boy
as ivir stepped. An' more betoken he knewn

the grand saycret av makin' beer from the heather, for he larnt it from his mother's third cousin, ould Nancy Doolin, the mid-wife, an' she larnt it from a fairy-woman that she was brought to *on bisness*. Iviry wan knows it's unlucky t' take money from the "good people," for it's shure t' turn t' laves or stones. So whin Nancy finished the bisness, an' left the fairy-woman wid as fine a garlough* as iver yeh clapped eyes on, she axed thim t' give her a saycret ; so they tould her, quite contagious-like, how t' make the beer from the heather. To be sure Tim nivir used any beer that-a-way, but he sed he cud ; so there's no knowin' what he'd be afther doin', av he was only let alone. Throth it was a black day for Mrs. McGurk an' Owney whin Tim was tuk ; for as I sed afore, he was a fine clane boy, and Brian, his brother, was a soart av quarther-clift—people sed he wasn't all right in his head. He was very partial t' book-larnin', an' whin he ought t' be landin' the pratees, why, it's gommochin'.

* An Irish term for a baby.

wid a book he'd be. Throth iviry wan used t' say that he was as bad as a field o' black pratees. For there 'ud be our brave Brian wid a bit o' chalk, makin' all soarts av quare curey-carey things on the sphade ; an' if any wan axed him what he was doin', he'd tell them he was makin' *ponds asses snorin'* ; an' shure it's as plain as the nose an yer face, that no wan wid brains enough in their head t' make it ache, 'ud ivir talk sich nonsense ! Anyhow, there's no denyin' it, but Brian knewn plenty av hard words. An shure he used t' make poethry, God help him ! about the sun, moon, an' stars, an' the mountains, too ! bless the mark ! an' sorra lie in it, but sometimes av a fine summer's evenin', there ye'd see Brian sthretched along an' the rocks down be the say, an' he watchin' the waves comin' rumblin' an' rollin' in.

Wan evenin' I was comin' along, quite compunctous-like, an' there he was, wid the two eyes av him watchin' the wather, like a hungry pig at a pot o' stirabout.

"God bless ye, Brian," sez I, but the

never a heed he tuk o' me, but kep an talkin' t' himself, an' rantin' av him about some wan he called *Eddy Pus*. I knewn it wasn't wan av the nabours, and I was a bit cur'ous t' know who it was ; so I sez again, "Brian, agra, who's Eddy Pus ?"

Och, widdy eelish ! all av' a suddint he got as bright as a new noggin, an' sez he t' me—

"Eddy Pus was a larned, ould, anschint man, Mrs. Moran ; he wrote a whole lot about the sun whin it was lookin' just as it's lookin' this minit, d'ye see, wid just wan spike av its bames above the wather."

"Arrah, Brian, avick !" sez I, for yeh see I was bint an humourin' the craythur, "an' who tould ye that ?"

"I heerd it the other day whin I wint up t' the big house wid some stoak* the ginteman that's tuthorin' Masther Willie was tellin' it t' him."

"It was mane av yeh t' listen t' what

* A kind of seaweed, which, when dressed, is eaten with roast meat. It is somewhat of an epicures' dish, and esteemed a great luxury.

people was sayin'," sez I, for Brian was a poor softy, wid not much behaviour.

"Yer right there," sez he, lookin' very sorraful ; "but I'd do anythin' for the larnin'. See there, sthraight fornint yeh, Mrs. Moran, there's caves an' castles down there, an' undther the wather, an' beautiful mermaids combin' their golden hair wid di'mond combs."

Throth, I don't mind tellin' you that I was beginnin' t' be afraid av Brian, for his two eyes war burnin' like sods av turf, an' his face was gettin' iviry colour, like a bad pratee. Howiver, as I sed afore, I was bint an' humourin' him, for I had a regard for the family, so I sez, sez I—

"Brian, acushla, what's a mermaid?"

"A lovely *colleen dhas*," sez he, "for all the world like Miss Grace, up at the big house, wid no clothes an but her hair, an' wan ind av her is a fish."

"Throth an' faith!" sez I, but betchune you and me I was only lettin' an to be cross, "they must be very ondacint, an' not fit for an

honest boy t' be spakin' to! Did yeh ivir see wan?"

"No," sez he, "but I'm sartin Miss Grace is like wan."

"Bedad, Brian McGurk," sez I, for I didn't like him t' be spakin' that-a-way av Miss Grace. "Ye'd betther not let any wan hear yeh say it; an' as for sayin' wan ind av her is like a fish, shure there's no sinse in that, for she has as purty a face an' as purty a pair o' feet as ye'd meet wid in a day's walk."

"Why, Mrs. Moran, I didn't mane no offence; it was poethry I was talkin'," sez he.

"Well," sez I, "I don't purtend t' be more larned nor me aiguals; but av that's poethry, all I can say is, that it's a powerful ondacint way t' spake av a woman."

"Faix, it's as thrue as yer standin' there, Mrs. Moran, what I tould yeh about the mermaids, an' shure they do be playin' an goold harps, an' singin'. Whisht! don't yeh hear thim roun' the point there beyant?"

"Arrah, be aisy, Brian," sez I, fit t' split wid the laughin', "shure them's the curlews!"

"Not a bit av it!" sez he, quite smart; "it's the mermaids. I heerd Miss Grace singin' in a' through the windy wan day, an' her goold curls all down her beautiful white neck, an' it was thin I thought she was like the mermaids."

Well, yeh see, me back was gettin' up agin, like the feathers an a turkey's tail, at hearin' him spake that-a-way about a young lady, an' I sez—

"There, yer spakin' about Miss Grace agin, an' sayin' that she has a voice like wan av thim schreechin' curlews!"

But, save us! the crathur was listenin' to thim noisy saybirds skylarkin' roun' the p'int, jist as continted as if it was the music av Paddy Flanagan's fiddle! an' throth, as I looked at him, I cudn't help thinkin' it was a cryin' sin t' hear a fine boy av eighteen like him spakin' such foolishness.

"She's like an imp," sez he, quite suddenint.

"Lord save us! who?" sez I.

"Miss Grace, av coorse," sez he. "Grace

be name, an' Grace be nathur, she goes along like an imp av the mountians."

I got mad intirely now, out-an'-out. It was bad enough what he sed afore, but this was beyant the beyants, and I cudn't stand it; so I ups an' I sez—

"Ye'd betther keep a civil tongue in yer head, Brian McGurk! Miss Grace an' all belongin' t' her is good t' you an' yours. Why, Miss Grace herself begged the masther hard t' thry an' git yer brother Jim aff, an' it ill becomes yeh t' call her a divil."

"What!" he roars; "show me the man or mortial that sed Miss Grace was a divil, an' I'll put daylight a' through him."

"Yeh sed it, yerself," sez I, as stout as I cud, for faix, I was all of a thrimble. "Yeh sed this minnit that Miss Grace was an imp, an' shure I've Father Pat Flynn's own words for it that the imps is the young divils!"

Well, will yeh b'lieve it? The poor foolish crathur cudn't see it; and he kep' sayin' somethin' about imps an' imps; so, bedad, I

was gettin' afeard, for he was talkin' away as if he had a whole faction roun' him. So aff I wint.

The very Sunda' afther, Father Pat Flynn gev out from th' althar that he wanted a boy. Shure iviry wan knows that t' be "the priest's boy" is a sitawation fit for a gintleman! Father Pat sed the boy was t' dhrive the jauntin' car, look afther the mare, an' sarve mass; an' for that he was t' get his lyin' an' risin', aitin' an' dhrinkin', an' four pounds a year. If that wasn't doin' the thing dacint, why lave it there! Aw! more betoken, av the boy wor a janius, Father Pat 'ud give Greek an' Latin an' the use av the globes into the bargain! Well, jist as his rivirence sed it, I seen Brian McGurk give his mother a pull be the back o' the cloak, an' whisper somethin' t' her. I was thinkin' in me own mind that gommochin' Brian 'ud be thryin' for the place, whin Father Pat sed—

"I'm gad t' see yeh, Mrs. McGurk, an' I hope yer as well as I'd wish yeh."

His rivirence was always a mighty pleasant-spoken man.

"Yis, thank yer rivirence kindly, I'm doin' bravely, sir."

Yeh see, Mrs. McGurk, as I tould yeh before, kem of a dacint family, an' had manners.

"Is that Brian I see behind yeh?" sez Father Pat.

"Yis, yer rivirence," sez Mrs. McGurk.

"Is it thrue he's a janius?" sez Father Pat.

"Throth, I dunno, yer rivirence," sez Mrs. McGurk; "but he's quare."

"All janiuses is," sez Father Pat.

"The nabours sez he's skupid, yer rivirence," sez Mrs. McGurk.

"Well, we'll ax himself," sez Father Pat.

"Stan' up, Brian. Now, Brian, are yeh skupid?"

"I dunno, yer rivirence," sez Brian.

"More shame for yeh, thin," sez Father Pat. "How does yer head feel?"

"Jist like a well-made stack o' whate, yer rivirence," sez Brian.

"I b'leeve yeh," sez Father Pat, "for there's plenty o' tatch an it."

"Och, yer rivirence," sez Brian, "I was mainin' that it feels that tight-packed."

"Tight-packed wid what—skupidness is it?" sez Father Pat.

"No, yer rivirence," sez Brian. "Begorra, I'm thinkin' its top-heavy I am in regard o' 'cuteness."

"Throth, Brian," sez Father Pat, shakin' his head an' lookin' very solemn-like. "I'm afeard yer a janius."

"I'm afeard so too, yer rivirence," sez Brian.

"I think I'll have t' take him, an' keep an eye an him, Mrs. McGurk," sez Father Pat.

"Av it's plazin' t' yer rivirence," sez Mrs. McGurk.

Yeh see she had powerful ginteel manners.

"I suppose yeh 'll want Latin an' Greek, an' the use av the globes in, Brian?" sez Father Pat.

"Av ye plaze, sir," sez Brian; "an' maybe yer rivirence 'ud throw in a sketch av poethry an' a taste av jomethry."

“Throth, nabours, yeh war all right,” sez Father Pat, t’ the whole chapel; “Brian McGurk’s a janius—there’s more in his head nor a curry-comb ’ud take out.”

Well t’ make a long story short, Brian wint as the boy t’ Father Pat’s. An’, throth, ye’d wondher how ginteel he looked in an ould black coat av his rivirence’s that fitted him to an appography; an’ his mother bought him a tall hat, an’ what betchune the cloth clothes an’ the hat, yeh wouldn’t know him from his betthers.

CHAPTER II.

I THINK it was about a twelvemonth afther, come Candlemas, that I met Mrs. McGurk dhrivin' the ass's cart home from Dhrogheda fair. She an' me was always nabourly, so she gev me a lift home wid me basket, an' sez she—

“Arrah, Mrs. Moran, did yeh hear the news?”

“Arrah, no!” sez I; “barrin' that Lanty Byrne's wife got a kitchen grate, no less! As av the harth that was good enough for thim that wint afore her wasn't good enough for her, but she must set up wid her high-falutin' ways!”

“Throth, yer right there,” sez Mrs. McGurk; “but shure what cud yeh expect from the likes av her? She was only a sarvint girl in Dublin, an' what cud she know about the ways av a dacint farmer's house? Why, she's always slashin' white-

wash roun' the kitchen—an' the sorra worse thing she cud do, for there's nothing wholesomer nor sut; an' shure it's no wondher she lost her fine boy last Chrisamas, for she used t' wash him iviry mornin' in the big washin' tub."

"Och!" sez I, "maybe she'll do bettther afther a bit; but what's yer news, Mrs. McGurk?"

"It's a grate day intirely for us," sez she. "Shure Brian's such a janius that Father Pat sez we must sind him t' college, and make a priest av him?"

"Throth, I'm proud for yeh, Mrs. McGurk," sez I; "an' when did Father Pat say it?"

"A' yistherday," sez she, "he kem down quite promiscus' like, an', sez he t' me, 'Mrs. McGurk,' sez he, 'I'm afeard Brian's too grate a janius intirely t' be a priest's boy.' 'It 'ud ill become the likes o' me t' say conthrairy t' yer rivirence,' sez I, 'an' I hope Brian is plazin' yer rivirence?' 'Yis,' sez he, 'he's well enough; he minds his

consthruin'—whativer that is—'an he's mindin' his book grand, but he's not mindin' my bisness. I sint him t' Bob Connor's for me boots th' other day, an' there I was waitin' for thim, mortal unaisy, for I was goin' t' christen a child for Mrs. Joyce, whin I seen Brian comin' along quiet an' aisy, readin' an ould newspaper, but the sorra pair o' boots wid him. I threwn up the windy,' sez Father Pat, 'an' schreeched out t' him for the boots. Well, he looked at me as if he was shot; an' what d'ye think but the omadhaun was readin' the paper the boots was rowled in, and he let them slip out an' nivir heeded them. To be shure, Brian wint back, but one boot was soakin' in a ditch, an' Peggy Brien's childher tied a sthring t' the other, an' filled it wid mud, an' med a cart av it. Throth,' sed his rivirence, 'I was that wild that I was near makin' Brian ait them, heeltaps and all!' An shure, Mrs. Moran, though Brian's me own flesh an' blood, I cudn't but say he was enough to vex even a priest."

“Thrue for yeh, Mrs. McGurk,” sez I; “an’ is that why ye’re goin’ to sind him t’ collidge?”

“No, agra, no!” sez Mrs. McGurk, an’ wid that she pulled a lot o’ papers out av her back pocket. “But see them? that poethry Brian med, an’ its all about the ould churchyard, an’ the crosses, an’ the saygulls, an’ Miss Grace. Father Pat sez it’s grand, an’ he showed it t’ the masther up at the big house, an’ he’s goin’ to give somethin’ a’ tost payin’ for Brian’s eddication. But shure, Brian’s comin’ in this evenin’, so yeh must come an’ hear him readin’ them!”

Well, av course it was only nathral I’d like to hear what Brian wrote, an’ I wint home wid Mrs. McGurk, an’ she med a flour-cake, an’ as the banes was plinty, she med some beautiful sthilk*, too; throth, there was lashin’s and lavin’s, for the McGurks was always free-handed people. But yeh nivir saw anythin’ like the grandeur of Brian! He had a bran-new shoot av black clothes, an’ a shirt as white as the dhriven snow!

* A dish composed of beans and potatoes mashed together.

"*Go manee Dia in sho!*"* sez he, comin' in an' takin' off his hat; quite the gintleman.

"Amin!" sez I, for his mother was tyin' up th' ass at the back o' the house. "Good luck t' ye, Brian."

"Thank yeh kindly, Mrs. Moran," sez he; "the same t' you."

After the aitin was over, Mrs. McGurk axed Brian to give us a sketch av the poethry, an' for two full hours he rowled it out av him as 'cute as a stone furlin' down a hill. But, saints above us! yeh nivir heerd sich nonsense! He sed in one part that the waves down at Kilscadden Bay was like big white horses, and that he was dhressed up in fancy—in fancy, mind yeh, whatever sort av a coat that is—an' was ridin' an thim. An' wan av the ballads was called "The Lagind av Kilscadden," where the poor foolish crathur sed that he was in the churchyard wan day, an' he seen a whole lot o' ghosts, an' they towld him a whole lot av stories about the ould towers an' the crasses, an' he med poethry out o' what they sed. But it

* God save all here.

was all sinse to what he sed about Miss Grace! 'Pon me conscience, av he called her a divil wanst, he did it a hundherd times. First she was a divil an the mountains, thin she was a divil an the say, an' behold yeh! thin she was a divil up in the threes, and whisperin' to him!

"Arrah, Brian, jewel!" sez I, "shure yeh hadn't the impidence t' call Miss Grace a divil up t' her face?"

"No," sez he, "I only called her an imp. It was Father Pat showed her the pomes."

"An' what did she say?" sez I.

"That they were grand all out," sez he, lookin that plazed an' consaited. "Father Pat is takin' his dinner up at the big house this evenin', an' I'm t' go up an' read a new pome for Miss Grace."

"Well, begorra, quolity is quare," sez I; "av any wan called me all the divils yer callin' Miss Grace, I wouldn't thank him for it."

That evenin' Brian wint up t' the big house, and whin he kem back his face was that white, an' his eyes like kindled sods, an'

he was all av a thrimble, that his mother wanted him t' go t' bed, an' take a bowl o' gruel with a lump o' butther in it, for he looked for all the world as av a could had got a grip av him. But he turned a deaf ear t' the mother, an' stud lanin' over the half-doore, antil he seen Father Pat goin' by, an thin he follied him home.

Very shortly afther, Brian wint t' colidge, an' the day he was goin' a lot o' the nabours, meself among the rest, wint up t' the McGurks' doore t' see him goin'; for Micky Dempsey, Father Pat's new boy, was t' take Brian an' his box t' the railway station—an' a splendid boxful av clothes he had too, a beautiful green wan, wid an illigant double bout! We war all givin' him the "God be wid yeh"—an' there were some there gev more nor that—whin who kem up but Miss Grace an' her father. Och! but she did look purty in her grand blue frock, an' her gold curls, an' her soft face—"jist like a flower," Brian sed in wan av his pomes, an', faix, it was the dacintest thing he ivir sed.

about her. There she was, laughin' an' smilin', wid a kind free word for ivirybody, an' her blue eyes dancin' out av her head. She brought Brian some books, an' showed him where she wrote his name in thim; an' I was mad wid the gommochin' fellow, for he stud wid not a word to say for himself, wid all his 'cuteness, but there he was starin' at Miss Grace as if she had horns; an' shure, what good was all his larnin' t' him, av it didn't tache him behaviour?

It was a mortal hard winther—that winther—throth we had weather, an' thin there was late frost in the spring that spilt the piatee crop; an' what betchune wan thing an' another, an' the loss av two fine pigs, with the masles, poor Mrs. McGurk an' Owney found it hard enough t' do. They war desperate hard put to it, for Mrs. McGurk told me all as wan; "But," sez she, "av we war t' starve for it, isn't it bettther t' have Brian a priest? for av we're losin' it wan way, we're gainin' it in another."

Av course there was nothin' t' say agin

that ; but, faix, I'm afeard there was many a time the poor McGurks was fastin' agin their will, an' they war that proud that wan cudn't well do anythin' for thim. Shure it wud be all right av Brian was ordained afther all. But, lo and behold yeh ! wan day Father Pat got a letther t' say Brian was comin' home dying wid a decline ! He nivir was a sthrong boy, and thin he got a cough, an' stuck too close t' his books, an' betchune all poor Brian kem home t' die. For five long weeks there he lay an the broad av his back, talkin' so nice an' so simple-like, that there wasn't wan in the parish that wouldn't run from this to Dublin for him. Miss Grace, and iviry wan at the big house, was very good, and sint clane sheets an' wine, an' all soarts av grand aitin' an' dhrinkin' ! The nabours used t' take turns t' sit up at night, for Mrs. McGurk was ould, yeh see, an' the crathur was that dazed wid the thrubble that sorra much use she was. Meself used t' be in there night an' day, for poor Brian had a grate regard for me ; an' more betoken, he used t' rimim-

ber me av me own fine boy that was killed at the Rooshian War. So that's how it was that I was there the evenin' Father Pat kem t' give Brian the sacrimints. The poor boy was axin' t' see Miss Grace wanst more afore he died, so I threw an me cloak, an' wint off for her. She was standin' in the windy, smilin' an' laughin', an' talkin' t' a lot av quality; but whin I tould her what I wanted the tears kem into her purty blue eyes, an' she just put an her hat in the hall, an' kem off wid me.

An' thin, shure, poor Brian tould her out quite brave-like that he wasn't sorry he was goin', for that for he'd nivir be very happy av he was t' live, an' he tould her that the raisin he med the pomes about her was in regard av him bein' very partial t' her.

"An'," sez he, "I thought may be av I was eddicated like a gintleman, that I'd be nearer t' yeh. But somethin' tould me how foolish it was, an' I saw the thruth; but from that out I had no heart in me at all, an' I got waker an' waker until I kem t' this. I hope I give no offince, Miss Grace!"

Well, what d'ye think? Och! throth I'm an ould fool t' be cryin' whin I think av it now! but purty Miss Grace stooped down, an' she kissed poor dyin' Brian's forehead, an' she said, quite soft—

“You never did anything to offend me, Brian; I always admired your poetry very much, and I am very grateful to you for your love.”

An' thin she sat down be the bed, an' held Brian's big hand in her two little white ones, an' she kep' whisperin' t' him that she'd always look afther ould Mrs. McGurk an' Owney; an' a lovely colour kem into his face, an' he sez t' Father Pat—

“Yer rivirence, will Miss Grace get to heaven?”

Not a lie I'm tellin' whin I say ould Father Pat was cryin' like a child. How-somediver he sed—

“Bedad, she will, Brian; she's only wan av the angels that's here for a little while.”

That was enough for Brian, for he knew Father Pat knew for sartin, an' he closed his

eyes, an', in less time nor I'm tellin' it, he wint off, quite an' aisy like a lamb.

There was a grand wake, an' the funeral was wan av the biggest ivir seen in that part o' the counthry. Miss Grace, and the fine handsome gintleman she was goin' t' be married t', kem t' the funeral; an' shure she nearly cried her purty eyes blind; an' very respectful t' Mrs. McGurk and Owney it was too; an' she put up a tombstone over the grave, an' the writin' an' it sed Brian was a grate janius intirely.

THE STRAY SOD OF TIERNACH BOG.

CHAPTER I.

Och, honey, jewil, an' is it thrue yer an Irish-woman an' nivir heerd av th' Sthray Sod av Tiernach Bog. But yer young yit, agra, an' don't know much; but throth, miss, I don't think I was more nor your age whin I knew all about th' sthray sod. Nobody knows th' exact place it's in, but iverywan knows *for sartin* that it's somewhere in Tiernach Bog. Och, bedad, miss, yez all that has th' book larnin' may laugh an' say that it's all fulishness—but th' proof av th' puddin' is in th' aitin'—an' av yeh'll jist listen t' me for a while I'll tell yeh a story about th' sthray sod, just as quare and as thrue as anythin' that ivir was prented in a book.

I'll go back t' th' time I first heerd av it

meself, an' that's more nor forty years ago. I was a dacint-lookin' colleen thin, miss, a'though yeh mightn't think it now t' look at me grey hairs an' me ould wrinkled face. But sure, asthore machree, th' hardships av th' famine year put as much thrubble over uz as if tin year had rowl'd over our heads. It was that year I lost me poor Pat, miss. Ay, indeed, miss. He died av the faver, lyin' undher a hedge, and left me wid four small childhre, wan a baby av three months ould. Well, God be good t' you an' yours, miss, shure I don't know what I'd ha' done, only for yer father's mother. God rest her sowl ! it's she that was th' good lady, wid a kind word an' a bag av oatenmale for ivery poor crathur in thim hard times. An', talkin' av me poor Pat, miss—his sowl t' glory this blessed Christmas Eve!—brings me t' what I was goin' t' tell yeh about th' sthray sod.

Well, alannah machree ! as I sed, forty year ago I was a likely-lookin' girsha, an' me poor Pat was as clane-built a boy as ye'd see in th' whole counthry, with a beautiful red

'blush right in th' hart av his cheeks. He had
 a sisther, miss—poor Maureen, th' high
 heavens be her bed!—a purty little crathur,
 wid lovely blue eyes, allaways lookin' as if
 she was in a wondher about somethin' or
 other, an' a head av black hair an her fit for
 a queen, an' th' dawniest pair av little feet
 anundher her iver yeh seen. The boys used
 t' be goin' mad about her, but th' niver a
 heed she tuk av thim at all, except av wan, be
 th' name av Mick Roche. He didn't belong
 t' these parts at all, for he kem from th'
 black north, an' was doin' a job av gardenin'
 wid Misther Miller, av Millerstown. He was
 a dark, sneakin'-looking fella, an' nayther me
 poor Pat nor his mother, Mrs. Boyle, liked
 him much; but poor Maureen Boyle was
 dead set an marryin' him, an' wouldn't even
 look at Miles Doherty, wid his three cows,
 an' snug bit av land. Bedad, miss, it's a
 turrible thing whin the raal love fastens an a
 woman; she can't get over it, an' go aff an'
 marry some wan else av she can't get th' wan
 she loves. Och, wirra, wirra, shure its betther

t' be a priest or a nun, nor run the risk av lovin' anywan too much.

Mrs. Boyle—me poor Pat's mother, miss—was a well-t'-do-farmer's widda, an' th' Christmas day afore we war married she asked me t' take dinner there. Av coorse I wint, and we had as fine a set-out av good aitin' as ivir yeh saw put an a table. There was plenty av platees, bacon, and cabbage, a roast turkey an' a biled goose ; an' as for the puddin', why it 'ud do yer heart good t' look at it ! We had company, too. There was th' Hartigans—ould Hartigan's father was married t' a cousin av Mrs. Boyle's aunt be marriage, so th' belonged t' th' family—an' there was Dinny Moriarty, the priest's boy, an' av coorse, Mick Roche. It was a mortal cowld Christmas day, wid th' snow three feet deep an th' ground ; so, afther th' dinner was done, we all gother roun' th' fire wid a glass av rattlin' poteen punch. Throth, I remimber it as well as av it was yestherda'—there was me poor Pat sittin' beside me wid his arm round me waist—I *had* a waist in them days, miss—an'

he whisperin' t' me that th' next Christmas we'd be in a little place av our own ; an' right opposite t' uz purty Maureen was sittin' wid Mick Roche an the settle-bed.

"May I never sin, but that was the grandest puddin' ever I ate," sez Phil Hartigan.

"There's no use in denyin' it, Mrs. Boyle, but yer a grand cook all out," sez Dinny Moriarty, the priest's boy. "Biddy Kirwan, up there at his rivirince's couldn't hould a candle t' yeh."

"I'm glad yez war plazed wid yer aitin'," sez Mrs. Boyle, smoothin' down her apern, an' houldin' her glass av poteen-punch afore her ; for she was a polite woman, and knew how to enthertain company. "But shure it's kind mother for me. She could bile a goose, or roast a turkey wid any one in the parish."

Shure we all knewn how thrue that was, an' we all said so ; and then Kitty Hartigan sung a ballad, an' a sweet voice she had, too ; an' Maureen sung "The Lament av Owen Roe ;" and we war all enjoyin' ourselves.

when Phil Hartigan looks out o' th' doore, an' he comes back t' the fire, an' he sez—

“By the tare o' war, but it's a cruel cowl'd night, an' it's snowin' away agin. I wouldn't like to have to cross Tiernach Bog t'-night.”

“No, bedad,” sez Mrs. Boyle. “Tiernach Bog is onlucky enough at any time—even in the broad daylight—in regard av the sthray sod that's there.”

“Arrah, Mrs. Boyle,” sez I, “an' what's the sthray sod? I nivir heerd av it.”

“Nayther did I,” sez Kitty Hartigan.

“Nor me,” sez Mick Roche, from the corner where he was sittin' wid Maureen.

“Arrah, then,” sez Mrs. Boyle, “shure it's not right for yez t' be livin' in th' place an' not t' know th' story av th' Sthray Sod av Tiernach Bog! an' there's Dinny Moriarty knows it betther nor anywan in th' parish. Will yeh tell th' story, Dinny?”

“Wid all th' veins o' my heart, Mrs. Boyle. I'll jist take a thimbleful more o' punch afore I begin.”

Well, Dinny got the little dhrop o' punch,

miss, an' we put a few more sods an th' fire, an' here's the story he towld. I nivir forgot it, an' I'll nivir forget it till me dyin' day:—

“It happened wan Christmas day, nabours, a mortal long time ago, an' Saint Pathrick was goin' t' prache down there at th' hermitage av Saint Erc, that's beyant there an' th' banks av th' Boyne convaniant t' Slane. Saint Erc wasn't much av a praicher himself, an' Saint Pathrick bein' a grate frind av his, he used t' do an odd turn for him in the way av praichin' now an' agin, especially whin the congregation didn't pay their dues reg'lar. Well, th' saint—I mane Saint Pathrick—had a boy, as it might be myself, yeh know, nabours,” sez Dinny—“an' he gev th' saint a power o' thrubble, for he was a soart av a janius, an' yez all know janiuses is niver quite right in their heads.”

“Thru for yeh, Dinny,” sez Mrs. Boyle; “yeh niver sed a thruer word. In th' place I was a-sarvice at, before I was marrid, th' masther used t' sit an th' top av th' house half th' night lookin' at th' stars a-through a spy-

glass, an' he niver washed himself, an' that was because he was a janius. Go an, Dinny."

"I will, Mrs. Boyle. Well, as I was sayin', th' saint's boy gev him a power av thrubble. He was always forgettin' th' fast days, an' begad, on this blessed Christmas day, his janius was runnin' an somethin' else, an' he forgot teetotal, an' he got up airly an he ate a mortial heavy breakfast av oatenmale stirabout.

" 'Och, *tundheranowns!* ' roars Saint Pathrick, 'what am I t' do wid yeh, at all at all, an' I wanted yeh t' come an' sarve at first mass at Saint Erc's this mornin'. Yeh ought t' be 'ashamed av yerself, yeh abnormal, an' unconsidherate, an' mendaciously gluttonous son av a mortial woman.'

" 'Arrah, hould hard, yer rivirence, hould hard,' sez th' saint's boy, all in a fright, an' no wondher, for how did he know but thim hard words might be a curse. 'Shure I'm very sorry, yer riverence, an' I'm willin' t' do pinince'

" 'Ye'll do it whether yer willin' or not,'

sez Saint Pathrick, who was in a tarin' passion. 'I'm in a hurry, for yeh let me oversleep meself too—so I haven't time to impose pinince an yeh antil I come back; anyhow, say yer prayers, an' don't attimpt t' lave th' house antil I see yeh agin.' An' wid that, Saint Pathrick stuck his mithre an his head, an' tuk his crozier in his hand, an' banged th' doore afther him, an' walked down th' road.

"He wint on fair an' aisy for a good bit, but at last he began t' feel unaisy in his mind at swarin' on a Christmas day. He got so disthressed about it, that he hardly knew where he was goin', an' jist as he kem t' th' banks av the Boyne, his fut shlipt, an' faix, in he wint. 'Mweillia Murther!' he sez t' himself, 'shure this a judgment an. me for lavin' that softy behind me. Anyhow it's lucky I haven't on me new vestments.' Well, behould yeh, there was Saint Pathrick in the Boyne, roarin' murther, an' makin' grabs at his mithre that was floatin' away from him, whin some people that kep a shebeen near,

hard him, an' kem an' tuck him out. He was all wet wid th' wather, so th' tuk him in an' dhried him, an' gev him somethin' t' keep him from catchin' cowl'd.

" Well, shure enough, the congregation over there at Saint Erc's was wondherin' what was keepin' Saint Pathrick that he didn't come; an' afther a bit th' wor all goin' away when all at wanst th' heerd some wan sayin' mass at th' althar. Av coorse, th' all thought it was Saint Pathrick an' war devout accordin' ! But, bedad, th' grandest part av it all was th' sarmon ! Such a sarmon was nivir heerd in that part av th' counthry before or since. He was jist tellin' thim th' sorra wan av thim but was good enough t' go t' heaven that minnit whin there was a hulla-bulloo at th' dure, an' who walks in but another Saint Pathrick !

" Well, th' minnit th' raal saint clapped his eyes an th' chap at th' althar, shure he knew what he was. For not a lie I'm tellin' whin I say it was th' divil himself dhressed up t' look like th' saint !

“ ‘ Och! holy Nelly!’ roared Saint Pathrick, ‘ an’ is this you, yeh desavin’ cornucopia?’ ”

“ ‘ Throth, it is,’ sez th’ divil, quite impident like.

“ ‘ Be off out o’ this!’ shouts th’ saint, makin’ a dowse at him wid th’ crozier—‘ it’ll take me a year t’ undo all th’ bad yeh tached thim.’ ”

“ ‘ Sorra bit av it,’ sez th’ divil; ‘ my prachin’ won’t do no good nor no harm, for I haven’t the unction.’ ”

“ Be this time Saint Pathrick kem up quite close, an’ quite an’ aisy he tuk up a little jug av holy wather an’ threwn it over th’ divil. It’s thin th’ murther was in airnest! The divil cudn’t stand th’ holy wather, and kep fizzin’ an’ steamin’, an’ his tail grew out, an’ two horns sprouted an his forehead, an’ he vanished in a flash o’ lightnin’.

“ As soon as iver chapel was over, Saint Pathrick hurried back, an’ a good long step he had t’ go, too, for he was thinkin’ av th’ softy he left at home. But, lo, an’ behold yeh! jist as he got about half-way across.

Tiernach Bog who did he see right fornint him, an' he dancin' a hornpipe like mad, but th' chap he was hurryin' home to. But the quare part av it was that as soon as iver Saint Pathrick 'ud get near him he'd be off further, whin all at wanst Saint Pathrick sed a charm at him t' make him stan' still, an' th' minnit he sed it th' chap was swallied up in th' hog!

“ Well, shure, thin Saint Pathrick knewn it was only th' divil that purtinded to be th' softy that was at his play-actin' agin, an' th' saint was in such a fluster that he forgot t' take off th' charm. So that's th' raison that av anywan stan's an the place where th' divil was swallied up he or she can't get out av th' bog, but goes sthrayin' about until somewan comes an' lades thim away.”

An' now, miss, that's the raal story av th' Sthray Sod av Tiernach Bog, jist as I heerd Dinny Moriarty tell it; but I must tell yeh about poor Maureen, miss, jist t' show yeh that it's no talk, but thruth, about th' sthray sod.

CHAPTER II.

“WELL, now, that was a grand story all out,” sez Mrs. Boyle. “Here’s yer health, Dinny, an’ may yeh niver die antil yer fit.”

“Thank yeh kindly,” sez Dinny; “th’ same t’ you, ma’am. I looks towards yeh, Mrs. Boyle, an’ I likewise bows.”

“I don’t believe in that nonsense av th’ sthray sod,” sez Mick Roche, with that ugly laugh av his. “I wouldn’t give in t’ such things. It’s the shortest way home for me acrass the bog, an’ that’s th’ way I’ll go to-night.”

“Mick, for th’ love o’ God don’t do that,” sez Maureen, openin’ her purty wondherin’ eyes, with a look av fright in them; “it’s on-lucky enough at any other time, an’ t’ night yeh’d niver find yer way at all wid th’ snow.”

Well, Mick kep’ laughin’ at her, an’ whin he was goin’ away, his road wasn’t wid th’ rest av us; an’ we all wint off an’ left Mick

standin' at the doore wid Maureen, and her arms roun' his neck, an' she askin' him not t' go home over the bog.

* * * * *

Achone-a-rie, miss, shure av women does be foolish for believin' th' many's th' quare thing that the men does laugh at them about, God only made thim so t' match th' men, that do be just as foolish in regard av being so contrary. Mick Roche was a little bit overtuk wid the punch, but that's many a good man's case, an' he kep' laughin' at what Maureen was sayin', an' he left her a'thout tellin' her whether or not he was goin' home across Tiernach Bog.

Well, I b'leeve the poor girsha was in a terrible way, an' cried nearly all night about it; but shure that grief was nothin' to the state she was in whin day afther day passed, an' nayther light nor sight was heerd av Mick Roche. Och, miss, jewil, but ye'd pity the poor crathur; there she'd be, out in th' cowl'd an' th' wet, wid her two eyes burnin' like coals o' fire in the middle av her face, an'



her long black hair flyin' an' th' wind; an' there she'd be wandherin' over Tiernach Bog, an' watchin' th' boys dhraggin' th' bog-holes, for they war afeard that, maybe, Mick missed his footin' an' tumbled in.

But, alannah machree, th' days went by—slow for some, fast enough for others. Fast enough for me, anyhow, for I was mar-rid soon afther, an' had th' kindest an' th' best husband iver broke bread—his sowl to glory this blessed day! I was only three months marrid when ould Mrs. Boyle died, and thin poor Maureen kem to live wid uz—that's wid Pat an' me. Troth that first Christmas day I spent in my own place was anythin' but a pleasant wan, a'though we had Dinny Moriarty, th' priest's boy, bekase he was such good company. But there sat Maureen by th' fire, wid the white face an' her, an' the sorra word out av her. She had been goin' from bad t' worse for a long time past, and she got a cowl'd, th' crathur; an' she got that thin an' white—her very hands got white, miss, jist like yer own—that she

couldn't walk the half-mile t' mass. Well, this very Christmas day she tuk th' notion that she'd let nothin' stop her from goin' to mass. So Pat—God rest his sowl, it's he was th' good brother as well as the good husband—well, shure, he yoked th' ass in th' asses' cart, an' we put a feather-bed an it, an' a quilt over that, an' put Maureen sittin' an it, an' brought her t' mass. Faix, there was many's th' wan said a prayer for her that day, whin th' looked at her poor, purty white face, for th' knewn right well that she was dyin' av brakin' av th' heart for Mick Roche.

In th' evenin', afther the dinner, me and Pat, an' Dinny an' Maureen was sittin' roun' the fire, an' Dinny was tellin' a grand story av Valentine an' Orson. It was a bitter cowld night—a green Christmas it was that year—an' th' win' was whistlin' roun' the cabin, an' makin' all soorts av noise, an' all at wanst Maureen started up, an' she says in a quare soort av a whisper—

“Listen,” she sez, “don't ye hear me mother and Mick at th' doore wantin' t' come in.”

"No, acushla, no," sez Pat, thryin' t' comfort her; "they're betther off, agra, nor t' be comin' back here."

"I tell yeh I hear thim," she screeches, wid her face as white as a sheet, an' her two eyes flamin' out av her head; "I tell yeh I hear thim—they're at the doore wantin' t' come in, an' wantin me."

"Well, acushla, t' plaze yeh I'll look," sez Pat, gettin' up an' openin' th' doore, where av coorse there was no wan, but the win' was roarin' an' whistlin', an' poor Maureen—that was that wake for weeks afore that she cud hardly walk the flure—makes a dash at the open doore, an' out she goes screechin' down be th' boreen as nimble as ivir she did in her best days.

"Och, Holy Mother, take care av her! What's this for at all!" sez Pat; "come on afther me the two av yez—she'll ketch her death av cowl."

Well, we all run as hard as ivir we cud. It was a dark night, an' th' win', as I sed, was blowin' powerful sthrong, an' there was

light rain along wid it, an' a'though we ran as hard as ivir we cud, Maureen was far ahead av uz. On she wint, an' off she sets right acrass Tiernach Bog. We cud hardly see her, an' was followin' her most be her screeches, whin all at wanst th' stopped, an' we lost sight av her altogether.

We sarched an' sarched, an' th' sorra bit av Maureen cud we find. Throth, we began to get freckened, an' afther sarchin' all over th' bog for more nor half th' night, we had t' give over, for th' powerin' rain an' storm was awful. We cud nayther see nor hear, an' for iviry step forward we tuk we war put back two steps be the win'.

Och! honey, jewil! miss, I'll nivir forget that Christmas night! Me poor Pat was like a madman, an' whin we found there was no use lookin' in the dark, he turned roun' an' he put his arms roun' me, an' th' poor boy cried as av his heart 'ud break. An' it's Dinny Moriarty that was th' comfort too. He sat wid us in th' cabin on th' edge av the bog until th' first sthroke av daylight, an'

thin we all wint out agin t' thry an' find th' poor girsha.

Long an' heartsore was th' sarch, miss, but shure we found little purty Maureen at last. Ay, there she lay, right in th' middle av the floe.* Right an' her back she was lyin', wid her lovely black hair all mixin' wid th' dirty black bog wather; there she was, wid her white face, an' her eyes half open: an' th' minit we clapped eyes an' her, we knewn that poor, purty, little Maureen was stark dead.

* * * * *

Well, well, miss, th' Lord sometimes has quare ways av doin' things, surely. Poor Maureen was berrid; we had a splindid wake, an' th' funeral was wan av th' finest ivir seen in th' parish. We tould Father Cahill what the poor crathur sed about her mother an' Mick callin' her, an' faix he scolded us up an' down for talkin' such foolishness. He sed, shure, what was thrue, miss. He sed that poor little Maureen's head got quare in regard

* *Floe*—the soft part of the bog.

av th' wakeness, an' that she was thinkin' so much av thim that was gone that she thought th' war callin' her. Av coorse, Father Cahill knewn th' ins an' outs av such things betther nor th' likes av uz—but, troth, it was all quare!

Och, wirra, wirra! but shure it's me an' Pat an' th' childhre that was comfortable for many's th' year together, antil th' hard times an' th' faver kem. Yeh warn't born thin, alannah, so yeh don't know anythin' about it. It was an awful time, acushla. There we'd be, diggin' up ridge afther ridge av piatees, an iviry wan rotted or black, or speckled. An' there we war, miss, wid nothin' else t' dipind an' for aitin'. An' sure th' worst av it was that th' crathurs was forced, from the very hunger-pains, t' ait th' bad piatees, an' that's what brought an th' faver.

There was wan day we war all sick, miss—ay, sick wid the hunger, an' it was jist before me baby was born. So I thrawn an me cloak, an' I crawled up t' yer gran-mamma's, miss, to ask for some oatenmale. I wint roun' be th' yard, an' I met Biddy

‘Tyrrell, a girsha that was at sarvice there, an’ sez she to me—

“Th’ misthress an’ masther, an’ two gintlemin from Dublin is out in th’ barn. Arrah, come out an’ see what’s there.”

Well, shure I wint into th’ barn, where they war all standin’ lookin’ at somethin’, an’ the misthress sez t’ me—

“Good mornin’, Nancy,” she sez. “Jist wait a minnit, an’ I’ll spake t’ yeh.”

“Come over here, Nancy,” sez the masther, “an’ see this afore we sind it off. It’s a poor fella’ that was lost in Tiernach Bog, an’ th’ body an’ clothes was so wondherfully pre-sarved that these gintlemin is goin’ to put it in a ’cademy in Dublin.”

I kem over an’ looked, miss, an’, ochone-a-rie!—shure I seen it was th’ corpse of Mick Roche!

I got very bad, miss, wid th’ fright; and the misthress, that was always good t’ iverywan about her, was very kind t’ me, God bless her. Aw, miss, I cud hardly b’lieve it at first, for he was lost nigh on fourteen year

afore. But there he was, and no mistake about it. I tould the gintlemin the story about him an' poor Maureen, an' throth th' war very kind. Th' wouldn't take poor Mick away, but we had th' corpse up in our own little cabin, an' th' all gev somethin' handsome a'tost a wake, an' we berried Mick in th' same grave wid poor Maureen that died for th' love av him.

Th' day av th' funeral Dinny Moriarty kem to me, and, sez he—

“Nancy,” sez he, “it was an onlucky thing for poor Mick Roche—God rest his sowl—t' laugh an' make fun av th' Sthray Sod of Tiernach Bog, for I wint down this mornin' t' see th' place where he was found; an', Nancy,” he sez, looking quite freckened-like, “it was in the very spot in th' floe where we found poor Maureen—her sowl to glory—lyin' stark dead on that Christamas night.”*

* The bog water possesses the property of preserving from decay anything immersed in it. As an example of this, I may mention that, some years ago the body of a man was found in a bog in Ireland—I forget the exact locality—clothed in an ancient Irish dress. The body and clothing were so perfect that, at first, an inquest was about being held upon the corpse—which must have lain in the bog for some centuries. I have seen and examined the clothes.—E. O. B.

OULD BUTLER'S WAKE.

CHAPTER I.

A KEENER, sur? Yis sur, I'm a keener. I'm an ould woman now, sur; an' I'm a keener this five-an'-thirty year. Ay, bedad, sur, this five-and-thirty year. An' for all that, there's not a keener in Ireland can bate me in th' voice yit; morebetoken, av I put th' laist taist o' sperrits t' me lips afore I begin, sur—mother o' Moses! shure it's that puts bone in me keen all out. I've only jist t' wet me lips; an' ax any wan that knows me, an' they 'll tell yeh that when I begin yeh can hear me keen all over th' parish! Yis, indeed, asthore machree, it's many an' many th' fine rousin' wake I helped at, an' will agin, plaze God, av it's th' Lord's will t' spare uz. But shure we seldom do have th'

raal rattlin' wakes that we used t' have twinty year ago. Bedad, a power o' fun wint outo' th' counthry whin Father Matthew—God rest his sowl!—med th' people take t' dhrinkin' cowl'd wather instid av parlymint* or a comfortable dhrop av potteen. Faix, there's nothin' like an eggshell full av potteen for risin' th' cockles av yer heart! There's many an' many's th' time, sur, that meself, afther bein' up for night afther night at wakes 'ud feel that tired that I'd be like a chip in porridge, nayther good for wan thing nor th' other. An' see here, sur; jist give me an eggshell full av th' raal native, an' I'm fit t' keen or t' sing ranns† until I feel dhry agin. But weirasthrue! shure it's on th' sly we do be havin' th' wakes, th' raal wakes, wid some fun an' a bit av a dance, t' keep up wan's sperrits nowadays. An' it's all sence Father Cahill kem into th' parish. It's he that's th' cute priest. Now there was ould Father Luke Flynn—th' heavens be his bed

* Licensed whisky, so called in contradistinction to "potteen" or illicit whisky.

† *Ranns*—wild impromptu recitatives.

this blessed day!—it's he that med th' beautifullest corpse for an ould man av any wan ivir I seen. Well, as I was sayin', there was ould Father Luke Flynn; he was th' nicest priest at a wake that ivir yeh knewn. He wasn't above takin' his tumbler av potteen punch wid a squeeze av a lemon in it t' give it a flavour. Throth! av there wasn't a tumbler handy, his rivirince wasn't a bit proud, an' he'd sit an' take it quite respectful-like, out av a noggin, or a cuppaun,* or anythin' else handy. I rimimber wanst we war wakin' a mother av Jim Keogh's—him that married a first cousin av Michauleen D'Arcy's th' boccagh† there beyant at Killeshandhra—an' shure it was th' very last wake poor ould Father Luke was at; an' sez he t' me—

“Bedad, Kitty Farrell,” sez he, “it's you that is th' beautiful keener, an' no mistake about it.”

“Thank yer rivirince kindly,” sez I; “I'm very sthrong in th' win', God be praised.

* *Cuppaun*—a small wooden bowl with which the butter is skimmed off the churn.

† *Boccagh*—a person with a reel foot.

Yer rivirince was allaways very nice an' civil-spoken, an' not a bit av a hard priest about dues an' pinance, an' begorra, ye'll have yer reward, for I'll keen over yeh th' grandest keen ivir yeh knew. An'," sez I, t' let him see I was in airnest, "I'll begin it be crying—

“Och! Father Luke, darlint! an' it's you that looks purty in yer grand linen grave-clothes, an' yer white ribbins, an' yer mould candles at yer head, an' yer mould candles at yer feet! Father Luke, agra, why did yeh die an' lave us wid th' heart sorra? But shure, acushla, yer gone t' glory, for yeh lived a vargint, an' yeh died a vargint*!'"

It was more nor two months afther that I keened poor ould Father Luke Flynn—th' high heavens be his bed! An' thin, shure, Father Cahill kem in his place. I'll nivir forget th' first Sunda' he sed Mass there beyant in th' chapel; there was a splindid chapel full. Bedad, th' nabours was as thick

* About thirty-five years ago, these identical words were used by a keener at the wake of a priest near Slane, co. Meath, Ireland.

as poreens,* for there was jist as many as only *got* Mass as thim that hard it.† I dunno how it was, but from th' very first—God forgive uz, an' he wan av th' clargy!—we war rayther mistrustful that he wasn't th' same soart av a priest as poor ould Father Luke was. An' faix, sur! it soon turned out that we war in th' right about him. Och! wisha, wisha! but it's he that had th' grand newfangled notions. An' me jewil! what d' ye think? but he got th' gratest frinds in th' wurruld wid ould Misther Eugene Butler, there beyant at Butlerstown, an' ould Butler a black Prodesdant. Aw! an' it's he was th' ould naygur! Why, th' sorra helper even he'd have in th' stables, 'athout seein' he was mindin' his business; an' shure that was no way for a gintleman t' go on. Well, there was wan night—it wasn't very long afther I

* *Poreens*—small potatoes.

† In the country parts of Ireland, where the chapel is very small and the attendance very large, it is no uncommon thing to see some of the congregation kneeling on the gravel outside the chapel door, devoutly telling their beads. These are said only to "get" Mass, in contradistinction to those inside, who "hear" it. It is a sight which I have repeatedly seen on a Sunday or saint's day in Ireland.

tuk t' th' keenin'—an' we war wakin' an ould mother av Pat Magrath's—her sowl t' glory this day! It was wan av th' hand-somest wakes I ivir was at, for th' Magraths had th' dacint dhrop in thim, an' knewn how t' do th' thing right an' proper. It was a flahoolagh * wake; lashins an' lavins av iviry-thin'; tay, white bread an' boxty bread,† wid plinty of potteen an' parlymint, snuff in a saucer, an' pipes an' tobacco, and a skiehogue ‡ av biled platees for thim that cared for thim. Well, me an' Biddy Dempsey—she wasn't much av a keenir, God help her! but she did her best—was keenin' ould Mrs. Magrath, whin all av a suddent poor Biddy's head got quare in regard av the' little dhrop o' dhrink. Meself, too, was gettin' tired, for I had a long spell at th' keenin; an' I was goin' t' rest awhile an' have a dhraw o' th' pipe whin who d' ye think comes in, an' gives th' “*Go manee*

* *Flahoolagh*—plentiful.

† Made of equal parts of meal and potatoes.

‡ *Skiehogue*—the oval wicker-basket in which the potatoes are drained.

Dia in sho" * but Barney Callaghan, th' dark fiddler.†

Me dear, shure an' it's there th' joy was, for th' boys an' girls only knewn they had t' give Barney a good rattlin' glass av potteen-punch, an' that he'd fiddle all night for them t' dance to. But yeh see, sur, there was a power o' nabours from far an' near at th' wake; an' th' kitchen was near chock full be raison av th' corpse bein' laid out on a shutther in th' middle av th' flure, so there wasn't much room for a dance.

"Arrah, boys! I'll tell yeh what ye'll do," sez Dark Barney, as he was tchunin' up th' fiddle. "Shure no wan can say but Mrs. Magrath has as dacint an' respectful a wake as her hart cud wish for; an' av aitch av yez sez a Patther an' Ave for her sowl, shure there's no raison in life why yez mayn't put her stannin' up behind th' doore over there

* *Go manee Dia in sho* (God save all here)—the ordinary salutation of the Irish peasant when crossing the threshold.

† In some parts of Ireland a blind person is called a "dark" person.

wid th' shutther afore her, an' thin yez can have yer dance."

"Thrue for yeh, Barney," sez I. "Shure it's offen an' offen we do that whin th' keenin' is over, and th' crathurs wants somethin' t' rise their sperrits."

So t' make a long story short, ould Mrs. Magrath's corpse was put stannin' up behind th' doore, wid th' shutther afore it, an' thin it was that th' fun began. Dark Barney was th' best fiddle in the barony, an' he jist sthruck up "The Priest in his Boots," when Darby Grogan led out Peggy Skerrett, an' they futed it in grand style! Aw! yeh nivir seen such a pair as th' war for humourin' a tchune! Throth! ye'd think for all th' wurruld that they larnt dancin' from a fairy piper on May Eve, they war that handy wid their feet! We war all lookin' at thim an' they war jist at th' cover th' buckle, whin there was a knockin' an' a rumpus at th' doore; an' who d' ye think walked in but Father Cahill an' Misther Eugene Butler. Begorra, sur! it was near bein' murther for

both body an' sowl, for Father Cahill laid roun' him wid th' horsewhip; an' whin he found some was thryin' t' hide until he'd go away, he swore he'd curse thim be bell, book an' candle-light, av they didn't be aff out o' that. Aw! shure that was enough t' frecken any wan, for the blackest curse out is a priest's curse.

Well, away th' all wint. While his rivirence was talkin' out av him, Misther Butler, the blacklookin' ould slieveen! was lainin' agin th' doore, wid his shouldher right agin th' shutther that was afore th' corpse, whin all av a suddint he turned roun', an' down wint th' shutther wid a clap, an' th' corpse fell right into ould Butler's arms!

Aw! shure it was no wondher he schreeched "Mwiellia murther!" for bedad! he thought he was kilt intirely an' no mistake. An' thin there was such a settlin' as yeh nivir seen, for Father Cahill wouldn't lave the cabin until th' corpse was laid out agin. But in th' middle av all th' bustlin', there stud ould

Butler wid his face near th' colour av the corpse's wid the fright he got.

"Arrah! yer honour! Misther Butler," sez I, whin his rivirince had his back turned, "just take a taist av potteen t' rouse yeh, sur. Shure it's no wondher yer face turned th' colour av a bad platee wid th' fright, for it was an onlucky thing—God betchune uz an' harm this blessed night!—for yeh t' git death into yer arms!"

"What d' ye mane?" he sez, all uv a thrimble, an' he dashin' th' eggshell av potteen on th' flure.

"Bedad, sur!" I ups an' I sez t' him, for th' not a wan av uz liked ould Butler; "I allaways sez what I mane; an,' take me word for it, there'll be a wake at yer own house afore th' year is out."

"What!" he roars, "an' d' ye think I'd allow anythin' so haythen?"

"Savin' yer presence, sur," sez I, quite couragious like, "yer betthers was waked an' keened too, God rest their sowls! An' av yeh was t' die t' morra yerself, sur, yer

son an' heir, Misther Hugh, isn't th' boy I take him for av he'd refuse his own father a respectable wake, wid whisky an' good aitin', an' ivirythin' complaté!"

"All I can say is," sez ould Butler, shakin' his fist at me—an' be this time his face was as red as a turkey cock's—"I'll lave it as me dyin' request that there's t' be no foolery" (*foolery*, mind yeh, th' ould haythen) "av the kind. An' av there is," sez he, "I'll rise in me coffin an' cut off Misther Hugh wid a shillin' av he allows anythin' av the soart! I will as shure as I'm a livin' man!"

"Throth, Misther Butler," sez I, making him a perlite curtchey as I was goin' out the doore; "it's well yeh sed that. Yez are a tough ould family, an' until yez are anundher th' clay wan can nivir be shure av yer dead or not. But, widdyeelish! shure iviry wan knows how hard it is t' kill weeds. The piatees 'll fail, 'an th' whate 'll fail, but, be-gorra, th' nettles an' th' prissha* nivir does."

* A yellow weed, which grows in the fields, and is most destructive to the crops.

CHAPTER II.

Aw! but it's them Butlers was th' quare lot, sur! Av course, yeh know ould Butler was married twice, sur? Yis, indeed, thin, he was, sur. The first time he married Miss Diana Garnett. Aw! it's she that was th' hard, close-fisted lady, jist as fond av th' money as he was himself. They had only wan son—that's Misther Hugh, sur. An' not long afther, Mrs. Butler died av a faver she caught. The sorra wan cared much; for it was in Dublin that it happened, an' there was no wake, nor funeral, nor nothin', so that she might jist as well not ha' died at all, for any good any wan got be it.

Well, for seven whole year ould Butler was a widda. And thin, me jewil, shure people 'ud hardly b'lieve their eyes whin th' saw th' new misthress he brought home t' Butlerstown! Aw! shure nobody cud ivir make out why she ivir married sich a black

lookin' ould fella' as he was! She was the purtiest, dawningest little crathur ivir yeh seen, wid blue eyes, an' goold hair, an' little hands an her th' very colour av new milk. But th' quarest part av it all was that iviry wan sed she was as fond av ould Butler as av he was th' finest an' handsomest young man in Ireland! An' shure wasn't he fond av her! Och, bedad, fond is no word for it! He thought there wasn't her aigual in th' wurruld. But shure she died—more's the pity!—an' left a little girl, jist two year ould, th' very moral av herself, wid goold hair and blue eyes, like two stars. Yis, sur, little Miss Norah grew up th' purtiest colleen in th' counthry. She had th' open hand an' th' kind free word for ivirybody, an' she had a step as light as a mountain goat. Shure it was a sayin' among uz that her weeshey little feet 'ud hardly crush th' heather an' the hills, an' that th' daisies used t' turn round an' look afther her, she was that purty. She was a white-headed, soft little thing; but wid a sperrit av her own, I can tell yeh, sur!

An' this is how her father kem t' see that whin she was roused she had the blood av th' proud Butlers in her.

Yeh see, sur, ould Butler thought that there nivir was th' likes av Miss Norah—God bless her!—an' he gev out t' Mистер Hugh that he was goin' t' lave her half th' property. Well, shure, tare-an-agers! but its Mистер Hugh was th' mad gintleman whin he hard it; but his ould father was so fond av Miss Norah that he wouldn't have a word sed agin it.

Well, asthore machree! shure ivirythin' was goin' on fair an' aisy for a while, until it kem to ould Butler's ears that Captain Dick Fitzgerald, th' finest an' clanest-built young man in the counthry, sur, was coortin Miss Norah. I dunno why it was, but there was allaways bad blood betchune th' Butlers an' th' Fitzgerald's; an' ould Butler swore that av Miss Norah didn't give up Captain Dick that he'd disown her, and lave all th' property t' Mистер Hugh.

Shure poor Miss Norah near cried her

purty eyes blind, sur; an' she tould her father t' recklect how fond he was av her own mother—the high heavens be her bed this blessed day!—an not t' be too hard on thim, bekase th' war that fond av wan another that they'd die av th' war sep'rated. But ould Butler turned th' deaf ear t' her, an' wouldn't listen t' her; an,' bedad, he sed so much t' her that she wint off th' next week and married Captain Dick in Dublin.

Aw! there's no use in talkin' but ould Butler was cut up awful about it. He began to be allaways ailin' about somethin' or another; but he was that set agin Miss Norah that he wouldn't let her name be mintioned. An' its Misther Hugh that wint on t' his likin'. He got roun' th' ould father, an' he persuaded him that he was th' best son livin', and that Miss Norah was th' ondutifullest crathur an' the face av God's earth. So ould Butler was gettin' worse an' worse, an' he was that crass an' bad timpered that he wouldn't let a wan av th' docthors a-near him; an', bedad, shure wan day th' found

him a-near dead wid the pain 'ithin in his inside; so they only had time t' git him t' make th' new will, lavin' all th' property to Misther Hugh. An', sez he, jist as he was at th' last gasp—

“Mind,” sez he to Misther Hugh, “yer not t' have any av thim haythen wakes at me berrin,” sez he; “for, av yeh do, it'll go hard an me, but I'll rise in me coffin and curse yez.”

“Father dear,” said Misther Hugh, and Nancy Doolin, that was there an' was tellin' me, sez he vas only purtindin' t' cry all the time. “Yer wishes is law to me. I hope yeh don't think I'd do anythin' yeh wouldn't wish?”

“That's a good boy,” sez ould Butler; “it's well I've wan obaydient child! An' wid that he gev a groan out av' him an' died off. Well, shure bedad!—we all thought we'd have a thry for a wake, an' a lot av uz—meself among thim, wint up t' ax Misther Hugh t' let uz wake th' ould masther.

“Yis,” sez Misther Hugh, comin' down t'

th' kitchen an' spakin to uz, "yeh may have a grand wake, av yez carry the coffin out t' th' barn. I have t' live among yez now, and I'm not goin' t' have any av me father's new-fangled ways. So go out t' th' barn an' have as much whisky an' tobacco as yez want."

Now that was doin' th' thing dacint, an' so we all sed so t' Misther Hugh. But begorra! who d'ye think was there but Miss Norah an' her husband, an' she cryin' her eyes out about her father.

"O, Hugh! Hugh!" she sez, "yeh oughn't t' have any wake. Yeh know poor father wouldn't have liked it."

"I'll do as I like," sez Misther Hugh, quite short. "I'm th' only masther here now."

Well, alannah machree! shure four av th' boys wint up t' th' bedroom t' carry down th' coffin, an' we all stud in th' hall ready t' keen afore it out t' th' barn. There th' war comin' down th' stairs fair an' aisy in their stockin' feet, not t' dirty th' carpets, whin all av a suddint Darby Corrigan makes a false step, an' down th' all come, an' th' coffin come wid

a thump an th' stairs, an' God's truth it is an' nothin' else that I'm tellin' yeh, sur, why, up sits th' corpse!

Och! Mhoniamondhieul! Shure an' it's thin th' ruction was. Th' sorra wan 'ud go a-near the coffin, an' there sot ould Butler an' sez he in a wondher—

“What th' divil are yez all doin'?”

“Goin' t' wake yeh, yer honour,” sez Darby Corrigan, from anundher the coffin.

“What!” he roars, an' a mighty sthrong voice he had, considherin' he was a corpse th' minit afore; “who gave you leave to have a wake?”

“We didn't come athout being invited,” sez I, comin' over, for me sperrit was up in regard av a glass, av punch I had in th' kitchen; “we knewn betther manners,” sez I, makin' a curtchey, t' show I had behaviour. “It was Misther Hugh, th' young masther, sed we might have th' wake. An throth! it's he has the raal blood of an Irish gintleman in him, for he sed we might have lashins av whisky an' tobacca; he's no naygur!

Not all as wan as some people I cud lay me finger an ! ”

“ Yeh impident woman,” sez ould Butler, shakin’ his fist at me. “ Yeh see I kept me promise. I sed av yez attimpted t’ wake me an’ t’ keen me that I’d rise in me coffin.”

Well, shure we war all that flustered about it that we warn’t right shure av we war on our heads or our heels. Anyway, it was sartin ould Butler wasn’t dead, for he was put t’ bed an’ th’ docthor was sint for. An’ th’ next thing we heard was, that it was somethin’ or other that bruk ’ithin in ould Butler’s inside, an’ that it was only suspindhers an’ alligathors* that was the matther wid him at all. But it was Misther Hugh that suffered for not doin’ what he was bid, an’ for breakin’ his promise. Shure what did ould Butler do, but he gev th’ son jist enough to take him away t’ Australa. An’ what does he do thin, but he makes a new will, an’ laves all th’ property t’ Miss Norah.

* *Suspindhers an’ alligathors*—probably the narrator means “suspended animation.”

Aw ! but it's he was glad t' have her wid him agin, an' he wouldn't let her go away ; so that's how she an' her husband an' the childhre does allaways live wid ould Butler. An' a nice lady she is, too, for all that she has new-fangled ways wid her, an' doesn't like a dance at a wake. But, throth ! she's kind t' th' poor ; an' av she isn't waked an' keened the way we'd like, there's many th' wan'll keen in the heart for her whinivir it's th' blessed Lord's will t' take her. Good-bye, sur ; God be wid yeh. *Bannacht ladth*, sur, until we meet again.

PHILOSOPHER PUSH.

CHAPTER I.

It's a long story, Miss Maria, but sence ye'r agreeable t' listen to it, why it 'ud ill become me t' say "no." More betoken, there's not a woman in the whole barony that can tell yeh th' ins an' outs av it half as well as me own self; for I've lived 'ithin a stone's throw av him for nigh four an' twinty year. Ay, indeed, miss, so I have, an' no wan in the parish knows betther nor me an' mine what a dacint, good nabour Push is. An' talkin' o' that—shure his name wasn't "Push" at all, but Tom Hennessey—that was a name that was put an him by raison av his havin' "Push" wrote up an the half-door av his shop. His father was as warm-hearted an' kind a crachur as ivir dhrew th' breath o'

life; but he was mortal fond av th' dhrop; an' throth he was a sorry han'ful, an' a heart-break t' his wife. God be wid the time I offen heerd me mother say whin I was a girsha, that it 'ud make the heart 'ithin yeh stand still an' stop batin' wid the soreness, for t' see poor Mrs. Hennessey wid her five childhre, an' sometimes not a bit t' put in their mouths, an' all along o' the dhrink. Bedad, it was near the ruination av thim all! Shure whin three av the children died wan desp'rate hard winther, the docthor sed it was for the most part in regard av th' want av aitin' an' dhrinkin'. But anyhow, av some war tuk, thim that was left med up for it, for betther childhre nor Biddy an' Tom Hennessey—that's Push, miss—never stepped! Bid wint t' sarvice, an' offen used t' sind the mother home some money, antil she got married, an' the crachur died soon afther. But it's Tom that was the boy! Ahoo! wasn't he? He was allaways industherin' at somethin' or other. The poor boy seen what the dhrink done for his father,

an' the sorra dhrop he'd ivir touch, but used t' save his money—the little he had, God help him—an' he bought a boat wid it, an' used t' have it an Derravarragh Lake; an' whin gintlemin 'ud come down from Dublin t' fish, Tom used t' go wid thim, an' get ped for his time an' for the boat.

An' it's he that was th' schollard, too! He had a whole shelf av th' dhresser full av th' splindidist books yeh ivir clapped yer two good-lookin' eyes an; an' well able t' read out av iviry wan av thim he was! Shure whin he was only a dawney, weeshy, little chap he wint right through the "Redamedaisy" * an' th' "Sivin Champions av Christendom," an' th' "Prophecies av Saint Columbkille." Och!—bedad ay!—it's Push that had the head-piece, an' good use he med' av it, too.

Whin Push was a fine, good-lookin' boy av three-an'-twenty, th' ould father—God rest his sowl!—died; and throth it's offen an' offen me mother used to make us screech

* "Reading made Easy"—the name of a primer used by the Irish peasantry, pronounced by them as above.

wid th' laughin' whin she'd be tellin' av th' legacy he left Tom.

"Tom," sez th' ould father, an' at that time he was near a' past spakin'; "Tom," sez he, "I haven't much t' lave yeh."

"Thru for yeh, father," sez Tom, knowin' in his own mind that it all wint in th' dhrink; but we all have our failins, God help uz! as well as poor ould Tom.

"Anyhow, I'll lave yeh me blessin', av yeh think it's worth havin'," sez he.

"Av coorse I do, father," hesez; "but don't be thinkin' av me at all; fix yer mind an where yer goin' to."

"I will avick," sez the ould father; "but before I go I want t' give yeh a bit av advice that'll be as good as a legacy in goold t' yeh."

"Let us hear it, father," sez Tom; an' me mother used t' say that th' all gother roun' th' bed to listen t' what he had t' say.

"Tom," sez he, "my advice t' yeh is this, an' see that yeh mind it, for it offen stud me in good sted, I can tell yeh. Whinivir yeh get into the middle av a fight, don't keep

lookin' about, but sthrike th' first head that comes in yer way—it mayn't be the right head, but sthrike it any way, on chance. It'll relieve yer feelins, ma bouchal."

As I said afore, me mother used offen t' make us laugh whin she'd be tellin' the story; for it was just wan av the quare, foolish things ye'd expect ould Hennessey t' say. Anyhow, Push didn't mind th' advice, for he was a mortial quite boy, an' afther th' ould father died, shure begad, he tuk the little slated house at th' cross-roads, an' opened a little giniral shop for th' mother an' himself. At first they didn't sell tay an' tobacco—only besoms an' staylaces, an' turf, an' shugar-sticks, an' cotton-balls, an' thim soart av things antil th' saved money enough t' buy a licence. Thin, me jewil! what d'ye think? but Tom got a grand counther put up, an' scales an' weights, an' he had "Push" wrote an the half-doore. Well, for long enough iviry wan used t' stop goin' back an' forra'd from fair or market at Mullingar an' thry an' find out what it was put there for.

But wan day in the chapel-yard, afther mass, Thady Gallagher sed it was the book-larnin' way av sayin' "Tom Hennessey;" an' shure it's as like as not he was right, for whin my own name is wrote down, it's not "Peggy" at all, but "Marget." Anyhow, be that as it may, th' name was put an him, an' from that day t' this he nivir was called nothin' but "Push."

The house was raal dacint, an' there was a nate little bit o' land that wint wid it, an' that Push used t' plough an' harra' himself, wid sometimes half a day's help from a willin' nabour. Me own poor husband—the high heavens be his bed this blessed day!—many's th' time gev him a help, for iviry wan liked Push, he was that good t' th' ould mother. He was a quare soart av a boy—throth, it's offen it was sed he ought t' be a priest or a counsellor, he was that handy wid his tongue; an' whin any wan 'ud say he was a good son, why he'd up an' he'd make answer—

"Faix! Whin yez do be all sayin' thim things I sometimes begin t' think that yez

forget that afther all human nathur is a grand thing, an', takin' it all in all, it's a powerful sight betther nor it gets credit for bein'. Shure it's only nathral for me t' look afther the mother that borned an' rared me; the raal wondher 'ud be av I didn't do it—even av she war a bad mother, lettin' alone th' good wan she is. Such talk isn't sayin' much for human nathur, an' what's more, thim that uses it doesn't know much about what it is. Isn't it offen yeh see childhre takin' all soarts av thrubble wid fathers an' mothers that's only a disgrace an' a shame t' thim? It's human nathur makes thim do it; faix, it's a grand thing all out, an' people goes about wid more av it in thim nor th' think; an' th' only differ betchune me an' other people is that it shows wid me bekase I was put t' the pin o' me collar t' see an' do th' best I cud for meself an' th' ould mother."

Yis, indeed, Miss Maria; that's the very way Push 'ud talk, an' nivir take a grain o' credit for himself at all. He was doin' well—so he was—for in the fishin' saison he used

t' have gintlemin lodgin' in th' house an' thin he'd go out wid thim an' Derravarragh Lake, an' what betchune wan thing an' another he got a dacint little bit o' money together. But wirra! wirra! that was the onlucky money t' more nor Push! Yeh see he wanted t' get married, an' t' see his childhre growin' up about him, an' small blame t' him for that same. So he was coortin' Nancy Reilly, that lived about a quarther av a mile beyant the cross-roads. It's she that was the purty girsha, an' as quite an' industhrus as Push himself. People used t' wondher why he didn't look out for a girl wid a stockin', or, maybe, a couple o' pigs or a cow; but Push was that fond o' Nancy, that throth he'd ha' married her wid just only th' clothes she stud up in! Begorra, she hadn't much more, for her mother was dead—God rest her sowl!—an' her father was an idle dhrunken fella, wid a karakther that wouldn't bear too much t' be sed, for the quieter he kep the betther. Bill Reilly was a dark soart av a man, a regular Shaughraun; sometimes he'd go aff for weeks

t'gether, an' nobody 'ud ivir know nothin' about him. Nancy herself usen't t' know—the crathur! an' there she'd be workin' the two hands offa her, for av she hadn't the bit an' the sup ready for her rutcheen av a father—for a cunnin'-lookin' little rutcheen he was—bedad, it 'ud be worse for her. Shure he had no soart av behaviour in him at all! for wan time he kem home he ate the seed-piatees! an' whin a man 'ud have th' maneness t' do th' likes o' that, shure what cud yeh expect from him? Ould Mrs. Hennessey used t' have Nancy up helping her whin she'd have the lodgers, for the girsha was a right clever cook, an' could set a dinner av bacon an chickens an' the table fit for a king. An' that's how it was that Push an' Nancy kem to be coortin' wan another.

CHAPTER II.

SOMETIMES, av coorse, Push used t' go t' Dublin t' lay in a stock o' things for the shop, an' whin he'd be comin' back, shure it's offen he'd bring a new book wid him, antil at last he had a sight av books that yeh wouldn't see the match av in the whole counthry. Wan time that he wint t' Dublin he bought a book tellin' about all soorts av grand picthurs that war med be a man av the name av Rimimbir; an' the very next time he wint t' Dublin he brought back a picthur that he med, an' that Push bought in—och! what's over me t' forget th' name av th' sthreet!—shure it's the name av a river—ay!—I have it now—Liffey Sthreet! Yis, he bought the picthur in Liffey Sthreet for wan an' tinpince. Throth meself didn't think much av it—the back av it was the very moral av an old sack! an' as for the picthur itself, saints above! it was like a piece

av ould brown leather, wid a few dirty red an' white spots an it! But be that as it may, shure some gintlemin that was down for the fishin', an' that lived in Thrinity College in Dublin, sed it was the meetin' av Pharaoh's daughther an' Queen Elizabeth on Mount Ararat; an' Push was that consaited out av his bargain, that he got Larry Kinselagh, the carpenther in Mullingar, t' make a frame for it; an' there it is yit, hangin' up in the kitchen, forenent the doore.

There was wan time Mrs. Hennessey had lodgers in the house, three fine sthrappin' gintlemin, that kem down for the fishin' on Derravarragh Lake. Some av thim was down before, an' known Nancy, an' used to be funnin' her about Push; but she was a dacint, well-behaved girsha, an' nivir med thim no answers, an' uset t' go about her work an' keep thim at a civil distance. They war fine, free-handed gintlemin, an' very good wid their money; an' whin they war goin' away, wan av them—that uset t' write books—med a song about Nancy, an' gev her the price av a wed-

din'-dhress av wine-coloured cashemer.* Bet-chune the money that Nancy an' Push had the very night the lodgers left, it was nigh an fifteen pound; an' that very evenin' who comes up t' Push's but Bill Reilly, Nancy's father. I was there meself too, an' we war jokin' Nancy an' Push, whin Bill sez, sez he—

“Mrs. Hennessey,” sez he, “I dunno what's the matter wid me, but I've a pain across two av me shouldhers, an' av yeh wouldn't mind I'd like t' lie down for a bit on the bed in the room there beyant, antil Nancy's ready t' come home.”

“Nivir say it twyct, to be shure, to be shure!” sez Mrs. Hennessey; “an' yeh must take a taste o' sperrits, for maybe it's a cowl'd has a grip o' yeh.”

“No, Mrs. Hennessey,” he sez; “I won't take it,” sez he.

An' throth me an' Push look'd at wan another wid all the eyes we had t' hear Bill Reilly refusin' the dhrink!

* A dress of “wine-coloured cashmere” is the favourite gala dress of an Irish peasant woman.

So he wint an' lay down an the bed in the little room off-a the kitchen, an' we war in th' other room next the shop, havin' some tay an' white bread an' butther, whin Nancy sez—

“I'll go in an' see how me father is now : he was very quare an' silent-like all the evenin' an' didn't even take much heed whin we war countin' the money.”

“He was thinkin' how hard it 'ud be t' give yeh up,” sez Push, quite soft to her ; “an' shure I don't wondher, for it's the brakin's o' me own heart yeh are intirely.”

“Arrah ! be aisy ! ” she sez, wid a beautiful red blush in the very heart av her cheeks, an' she run into the room, but back she was agin while ye'd be winkin'.

“Me father isn't there,” she sez, lookin' frightened-like ; “maybe he got sick, and wint home, for the back door is open. I must go afther him an' see.”

No wan could say agin that, for it was only right an' proper. So aff she wint, an' Push wint wid her. I sted wid ould Mrs. Hen-

nessey antil he kem back, an' towld uz that Bill Reilly hadn't gone home, an' poor Nancy was afeard he was gone aff an some av his gallivantin's, an' near cried her eyes out. Push sed he wanted her t' come back to his mother, but she wouldn't, for she sed she had a short time enough to be wid her father, an' she'd stay for fear he come in an' want anythin'.

* * * * *

Och! Miss Maria, alannah! the weary's on it for money! Why is it, at all at all, that people can't be sarriswhied wid whativir God sinds thim? Thim that has it does be complainin', an' them that hasn't it does be complainin' worse; an' shure whin the divil puts the love av it into people's minds, they don' mind sinnin' their sowls an' all for love av the dirty money! Faix, the likes av thim nivir rimimbirs their sowls at all, any more nor thim haythen Jews that sowld the blessed Lord! Shure, it's many an' many's the time I heerd Misther Moriarty, the schoolmasther,



say that the curse av the love av money, an' the allaways hungerin' afther it, is an thim murtherin Jews t' this day!

Well, t' make a long story short, the very next mornin' Push was goin' t' pay the rint that day, an' he wint t' get the money out av a ticken bag he uset t' keep it in, in the box in the room; an' lo! an' behold yeh!—nayther sight nor light av his money cud he see! It was quare, shure enough—an' what was worse, it wasn't only the rint money that was gone, but all that he an' Nancy had airned wid the gintlemin, and the price av four fine pigs into the bargain. It was too bad intirely. Push sarched ivirywhere, but he felt purty shure it was robbed from him, an' that the robber was no wan but Bill Reilly, for no wan but Bill an' Nancy wint into the room!

“Say nothin' about it,” sez he t' the mother, “antil I go over an' spake to Nancy.”

So the poor boy wint up the road like a madman; but whin he got t' Bill's the pad-lock was an the doore, an' no wan to be seen.

Thinkin' that maybe Nancy 'ud soon be back, he sot anundher the hedge an' waited antil he was tired.

"Av coorse she'll be down by-an'-by," he sez t' the mother. But bedad, Nancy nivir kem, an' Push nivir got his money, for she an' her father nivir kem back.

It was a quare thing altogether, an' no wan knew what t' make av it at all. As for Push himself, why he'd stop any wan that 'ud begin t' talk about it, so no wan knewn what his mind was about Nancy. Ould Mrs. Hennessey died a couple o' years afther, an' people thought then that Push 'ud get marri'd. But there he sted mindin' his shop an' the fishin', an' seldom goin' anywhere; but he was the kindest an' the best nabour ivir dhrew breath! Och; it's no wondher the tears av thankfulness comes up from me heart, Miss Maria, whin I think av all he did for me whin I was left a widda with four small childhre—wan av thim at the breast! Push looked afther me bit o' land, an' taiched the boys to help him, an' I may say he



brought thim up for me. God reward him!—
an' so He has.

Ah, indeed, Miss Maria! it was only a
Chrisamas Eve mornin' that I was standin'
at the doore knitten', whin a dacint woman,
dhressed very quite an' respectable, kem along
the road an' stops an' looks hard at me.

"Can yeh tell me, av yeh plase," sez she,
"if Tom Hennessey lives here yit?"

"Yis, ma'am," sez I; "there beyant at
the turn. He keeps the shop at the cross-
roads."

"Are you Peggy Boyle," sez she.

"Yis, ma'am," sez I, wondherin' how she
knew me.

"Will yeh let me come in an' sit down?"
sez she.

Av coorse I did; an' she kem in an' tuk
aff her bonnet an' shawl, an' not a lie I'm
tellin' whin I say I thrimbled as if it was a
ghost I saw—for there sot Nancy Reilly!

Well, yeh see, iviry wan uset t' be givin'
her the hard word after her goin' aff that-a-
way, but, throth, meself was so wondherin'

at seein' her, that I nivir thought av anythin', but sez—

“Arrah, Nancy Reilly! an' is this you, avourneen? What bekem av yeh at all at all, all this time?”

Faix, she was cryin' away as hard as ivir she cud, an' nivir med me no answer.

“Nancy, agra,” sez I, “are yeh goin' over t' see Push? Throth! it's lonesome enough he is now, sence the ould mother died.”

“Isn't he marrid?” she sez.

“Marrid!” sez I. “No, bedad, Nancy! he nivir looked at a colleen sence yeh wint aff from him.”

“Peggy Boyle,” sez Nancy t' me, “yeh war at Mrs. Hennessey's the last night I was there; so yeh know all about how me father wint into the room, purtindin' t' lie down an the bed?”

“Yis, acushla,” sez I; “an' I rimimbir we all laughed at him whin he refused t' take the sperrits.”

“That was for t' keep his head clear,” she

sez. " Och ! Peggy jewil ! there's no use in denyin' it. Shure he stole the money, an' kem back late that night an' towld me he tuk it, an' that the polis war afther him for bein' joined wid a band av smugglers. The heart 'ithin me died whin I heerd it ; an' I wint an me knees to him t' ask him t' give up Push's money ; but he wouldn't. An' he sed, av I didn't go wid him an' help him t' escape t' Amerikay, that, av he was tuk, he'd sware be bell, book, an' candlelight, that I allaways helped him in his bad ways. I was a simple girsha thin, Peggy, only eighteen year ould, an' I didn't know much ; an' I knewn how proud Push was av his good name ; so I wint aff wid me father, an' a hard time I had av it wid him. He died a year an' a half ago in Canada, an' betchune wan thing an' another, I saved up money enough t' pay Push, an' I have it here in me pocket for him. I was thinkin' av sindin' it t' the priest as restitution money, but thin I thought I'd like t' come an' see the ould counthry wanst more. So I'll go

over t' Push's, Peggy, an' thin, maybe, whin I come back ye'll give me a shake-down for the sake of ould times."

"Yis, throth! I will, Nancy, wid a cead-mille failthæ,"* sez I; an' away she wint up the road.

I was watchin' for her for a long time, an' the evenin' was just closin' in, whin wan o' Pat Magrath's childhre kem runnin' in t' me, an' he sez—

"Mrs. Boyle," sez he, "Push wants yeh," sez he; "an' yer t' come over this minit t' the shop."

I didn't wait t' throw an me cloak or anything, but run aff as I was. Throth! it 'ud do yer heart good t' see the look an Push's face whin I wint into the kitchen. There was a roarin' turf fire, an' the kittle hangin' on the crook over it, an' Push sittin' an the settle-bed, wid his two hands an his knees, an' he wid his eyes fastened on Nancy, no matther where she wint. An' there she was wid her gownd tucked up, an' she gettin' the taycups

* A hundred thousand welcomes.

an' saucers down from the dhresser, just the way she uset whin Mrs. Hennessey was there sixteen year ago.

Shure I seen at wanst how it all was, an' I wint over an' shook hands wid Push 'athout sayin' a word. He kep lookin' at Nancy, an' two big tears rowled down his cheeks, an' he stud up, an' he sez—

“Peggy,” sez he, “I want yeh t' let Nancy live wid yeh antil we can get called in chapel. Won't yeh do that for an ould nabour?”

“Throth, Push!” sez I, “it's angry wid yeh I am for thinkin' yeh want t' ask me such a thing! Av coorse, Nancy'll come t' me!”

So that's all, Miss Maria. Nancy an' Push is t' be marrid at the beginnin' av the new year. An' what d'ye think was the last thing Push sed last night?

“Well,” sez he, “God's very good—a powerful sight more so nor we deserve—an', afther all, human nathur's the grandest thing out. It was wake human nathur med Nancy mis-thrust me an' go away, but it was sthrong human nathur that med her want t' come

back t' ould counthry ; an' now, shure it's
only the hoighth av human nathur that makes
uz want t' get marrid an' be t'gether for the
rest av our days. The Lord be praised for
all His mercies, this blessed Chrisamas Eve !”

An' betchune laughin' an' cryin' we both
sed—

“Amin !”

LOVELY KATTY KEOGH.

SWAMPS and low-lying grounds ; dark marshes and ditches, emitting a noisome and pestilential stench ; to the north, the sluggish, shoally Liffey, winding its slow course along ; southwards, and distant about a quarter of a mile, the city of Dublin. Such were the surroundings of the once famous and infamous Hell Fire Club.

Mais nous avons changè tout cela ; so that, instead of the dreary waste here described, the poor and populous suburb of Newfoundland has sprung up in the district. At best it is a dismal place, and one could well fancy the perturbed spirits of the rollicking members of the club holding high revel upon the scene of their wickedness when in the flesh. On, or very near the spot where the club stood, is erected the church of St. Barnabas. Not so very long ago the writer was present at the

consecration of said church, and confesses to have been lost in a waking dream, in which bishops, priests, and deacons faded away, whilst in their places rose up the Bloods and Bucks, which, it is well known, had been the former denizens of the neighbourhood.

The Hell Fire Club was an odd-looking, irregularly built edifice of Killiney granite, consisting of but one story above the basement. The entrance-door opened immediately into the principal apartment, which was large, low-roofed, and octagon-shaped. The walls were coarsely plastered, and upon the mortar, when wet, a diagonal pattern had been drawn—the sole attempt at decoration of any kind. The table was of stone ; stone benches were ranged at either side of it, and a rude sort of stone *buffet* was laden with silver flagons and drinking cups of various kinds. Three or four flaring iron cressets hung at intervals along the walls, dimly revealing the ten or twelve occupants of the room, their costly flame-coloured suits contrasting strangely with the incongruous surroundings. Tradition says that these daring spirits some-

times set fire to the apartment, and sat there until they could endure the heat no longer; thus, they said, inuring themselves to the flames of hell.

The winter's night was far spent, the men had been drinking deeply, and several of them lay, stupid with wine, on the heather-covered floor. Three others yet sat at the table, their drunken, boisterous merriment evidently a source of annoyance to two of their companions who were seated a little apart from them, engaged in a game of cards. Shiel Keogh, the elder of the two, was a middle-aged man, with the eager, hunted, restless countenance of the confirmed gambler. His long, nervous, sinewy fingers tremblingly clutched the cards, whilst the fierce, greedy eyes gloated over each one thrown down by his companion. But it was no marvel that Shiel Keogh played desperately, for he had just staked his small remaining patrimony upon the turn of a card.

Staked it—and lost!

With a groan, the wretched man bent his head upon his folded arms. The winner, Con

Plunkett, a tall, handsome, but dissipated-looking man, of about eight-and-twenty, coolly gathered up the cards, shuffled them, and said carelessly—

“Come, Shiel, have another game?”

He started up, an ominous light flashing from his dry, haggard-looking eyes, as he exclaimed, hoarsely—

“Have a care, Con Plunkett! have a care! Your invitation is almost an insult! You know that my daughter and I are now beggars.”

Con Plunkett still abstractedly shuffled the cards; lazily watched the drinkers fall one by one to the floor, and asked—

“How old is your daughter, Shiel, and what is she like?”

“Just sixteen. I have not seen her for a year, but then she promised to be very beautiful.”

“Where is she—in Dublin?”

“No, at a boarding-school in Portarlinton.”

“Shiel,” said Plunkett, looking steadily at him, “shouldn’t you like another game. Look at the cards. There they are, ready.”

“For the sake of our patron” (such was the usual form of adjuration of the members of the club), “don’t tempt me,” exclaimed the miserable man, with whom the love of play was a madness—and Plunkett knew it.

“You can easily have another game if you like,” continued the tempter, in his icy, measured tones, “and even a more exciting one than the last.”

“Mind what you are about!” exclaimed Shiel, threateningly. “It is true I am a pauper, but I am an Irish gentleman and your equal, and I shall demand satisfaction if you dare to insult me!”

“Do not excite yourself. I merely thought you wished for another game, and was about to make a proposition to you.” He spoke with exasperating calmness, and carelessly threw the cards on the table in a manner which thoroughly roused the fiery spirit of Shiel Keogh.

“What the devil are you driving at?” he asked. “No wonder you are called ‘Plausible Plunkett.’”

The other laughed a low little laugh which was not good to hear ; and replied—

“Why, just this. I’ll play you for your daughter. Stake her against your property, which I have just relieved you of.”

Two days afterwards there was unwonted excitement in Mrs. Duigan’s boarding-school at Portarlinton. A grand black and yellow postchaise stood at the door, whilst Shiel and Con Plunkett were in the school parlour asking for Miss Keogh. Mrs. Duigan—a “Mrs.” only by courtesy, as was then the fashion, witness Mrs. Hannah More—was entertaining the visitors in a stately, frigid manner, pending the advent of the young lady.

“I trust you will find Miss Katty has profited by the advantages she has had the blessing to enjoy in this abode of science,” said the lady, primly folding her black-mitted hands.

“I have no doubt but I shall, madam,” promptly responded Shiel Keogh, who seldom had the courage to write a letter, fire-eater though he was.

“She performs delicately upon the guitar

—is well acquainted with ancient history, the use of the globes, and the French language as spoken in Paris,” continued the lady ; “ but it is a source of regret that Miss Katty is deficient in the feminine art of needle-work.”

“ Very sad, indeed,” gravely remarked Shiel, who heartily wished the delinquent would make her appearance.

“ For nearly two years Miss Katty has been engaged at a piece of tapestry in tent-stitch, representing Adam and Eve being driven out of the Garden of Eden by the Angel, and six times has she picked out the angel’s eyes ! ”

With difficulty the gentlemen preserved composed countenances, Con Plunkett mentally remarking that such practices did not augur well for future connubial happiness. Before either had time to reply the door was opened, and Katty Keogh entered.

A tall, blooming, bright-eyed girl, as fresh as a rose ; her abundant dark hair gathered to the very top of her pretty head, where it was distended into two hideously unbecoming bows, surmounted by a high tortoise-shell comb. A bunch of curls drooped at either

side of her face, meeting nearly at the tip of her nose. A blue cloth gown with the waist under her armpits; the short skirt clinging as fashionably tight as an evident paucity of petticoats would permit, white silk stockings with scarlet "clocks" and sandalled shoes. Such was lovely Katty Keogh on that November day, 1797.

She stopped for an instant at the door, made a profound courtesy to each greeting, then advanced and formally kissed her father on the forehead. He at once rose and taking her by the hand, introduced her to Con, saying—

"Katty, this is Mr. Con Plunkett, who has honoured you by requesting your hand in marriage."

The girl did not move. She became deadly pale, and one sentence alone issued from her white lips—

"Father, I cannot."

"Maidenly modesty," said her possessor; whose chattel she was, as undeniably as was the sword which hung by his side. "During our journey to Dublin I may induce Miss Keogh to look more favourably upon me."

“Father! sure you don’t mean it? You are not going to take me away—to make me marry a man against my will!”

“Nonsense!” replied her father; “put on your hat and come.”

The girl’s bright eyes flashed; her hands clasped and un-clasped, as she asked with a gasp, whilst a rosy flush suffused her cheek—

“Father, I must know this—has any one else asked you for me in marriage?”

“No one. Why?”

She again became deadly pale.

“No matter why; but you must not ask me to marry this gentleman. I thank him for the honour he has done me, but I cannot marry him.”

“Madam,” said Shiel Keogh, addressing himself to the school-mistress, “can I have a few minutes’ conversation alone with my daughter and Mr. Plunkett?”

The old lady took the hint and retired.

A long and stormy interview—but no commands or entreaties could move the girl. At length, Shiel Keogh, goaded to desperation by her determined refusals, incautiously told

her that she was pledged to Con Plunkett as payment for a gambling debt. The almost maddened girl was hurried into a post-chaise, and married to Con Plunkett the next day in Christ Church, Dublin. As the strange marriage party were leaving the building a young man stepped forward, and exclaimed bitterly—

“My heavy curse light upon you, Katty Plunkett, for so grievously deceiving me.”

The wretched bride looked at him steadily for a minute, and then answered in a loud, distinct voice :—

“Henry Faulkiner—I love you better than any one on this earth. I hate the man to whom I am legally married. But I had no redress ; my father gambled me away to him.”

Those were troublous days for Ireland. For several years fire and sword held sway there, and desolation reigned throughout the land. Con Plunkett filled a prominent place amongst the agitators, and narrowly escaped the sad, untimely death of many a better man. After the Act of Union he retired to his estate in Tipperary ; and there, as the

years rolled on, sons and daughters were born unto him. But it was a cheerless, loveless home; his wife openly expressed her undying hate for him; he was a cold, hard man, and never took any pains to win her love; so that one bright spring morning in the year 1839, when he was shot down like a dog by some of his own tenants, as he stood near his wife on the lawn, she said, coolly—

“Take the body in, and send for the doctor.”

Her eldest son inherited the property, and his mother left and went to reside in Dublin. Some few years afterwards she was on a visit at her old home, and walking in the garden one day, a man, engaged in digging potatoes, turned suddenly round and looked at the yet fine-looking, handsome old woman.

“You are the man who shot my husband,” said she.

“Ho! so yeh know me!” he answered, with a malignant scowl; “inform on me, an’ there’s twenty boys in the barony, every wan av them pledged to shoot yer son.”

That son was the one, of all her children,

she really cared for ; but with her old spirit. she would not let the man see she was frightened at his words. With a shrug of contempt, she replied—

“I have no intention of informing upon you ; you rid me of the curse of my life.”

Henry Faulkner, her first and only love, she never heard of again. There was a rumour of his death ; it was said he had been killed in the rebellion of '98, but no one ever knew for certain.

This brief sketch, the details of which I have had direct from the lips of her who was once “lovely Katty Keogh,” will serve to illustrate one phase of Irish life at the close of the last century. The old lady died, some few years ago, at the house of a relative of my own where she was on a visit. She preserved her faculties to the last, and with her customary fire and vigour battled with the rider of the pale horse, until she could no longer hide from herself the fact that she must accompany him. I was in the house when she died, and her last words were, “Oh ! great God ! I have sinned ! God help me !”

NORAH KINSELLAGH.

SWEET were the Finglas Woods on the morning of the first of May, 1798—that blurred page in Irish history—and the rosy dawn was just breaking over the groves of Finglas, a straggling hamlet lying about four miles to the north of Dublin. For “Faire Dublin citie” had not been extended to its present dimensions. At that period, green undulating pastures spread even to where St. George’s Church now stands, so that Finglas was then at least six miles from the metropolis. Westwards from the hamlet stretched the pleasant fields, once the site of King William’s camp after the battle of the Boyne. From thence had he gone to St. Patrick’s Cathedral, where he was crowned—some say like Napoleon I., by placing the emblem of sovereignty upon his head with his own hands.

Thither he returned when the ceremony was over, preferring, doubtless, to dwell in the security of his camp, than in the possible insecurity of Dublin Castle, whence the traitor King had fled only the day before.

The sun had not yet quite risen above the horizon, and the balmy freshness of the morn was embodied in the dewdrops which hung upon the leaves and tender green shafts and spires of grass, glittering upon the gossamer like crystal beads upon a silver thread. Notwithstanding that the day was scarcely three hours' old, a group of merry peasant girls ran gaily through the Finglas woods that morning, hurrying, hurrying onward to the grassy slopes of the River Tolka, anxious to get there before sunrise to bathe their faces in the dewy grass. For know, gentle reader, these simple maidens were

" Seeking
A spell in the young year's flowers,
Where the magical May-dew was weeping
It's tears o'er the balmy bowers."

For to bathe the face in the May-dew is con-

sidered by Irish peasant girls to be an infallible preservative of beauty.

“Why, Norah avourneen !”

The exclamation was addressed to a girl who came hastily down the woodland path and joined the gay group. She was about twenty, tall and dark-complexioned, with dark-grey, sad-looking eyes, and abundance of rich blue-black hair, secured high up on her head by a horn comb. Attired in a scarlet linsey petticoat, short striped blue and white bedgown, blue yarn stockings, and stout buckled shoes, she looked a fair specimen of the “comfortable” Irish farmer’s daughter.

“Good-mornin’, girshas,” was her reply to their salutation. “Are yeh goin’ t’ gether plubbesthiens* for the May-pole this evenin’?”

“Yis,” answered the first speaker. “Throth it’s a sight for sore eyes t’ see yeh here av a May mornin’, avick !”

“Ye’re right t’ come among us agin, Norah,” said another, “an’ not t’ let the black thrubble take a houl’t av yeh, intirely.”

* The Irish name for the yellow Mayflowers.

Norah Kinsellagh's lip trembled a little as she stood there, her arms folded, and her deep, dreamy eyes looking wistfully over the sweet landscape.

"The sorra wan av me knows what med me come here this mornin'," she said, slowly. "I got up bekase the sleep wint from me afther a quare dhrame I had."

"Arrah, Norah, tell it t' us," they exclaimed, eagerly clustering around her. "Whatever yeh dhrame on May-eve is shure t' come thru av yeh jumped clane athrough the bonfire the night afore."

"That's it," replied the girl, with a shudder. "Whin I thried t' jump through it last night, I got a pain in the middle o' my heart, an' me feet thripped that suddint that I didn't give a clane jump."

They looked blankly at each other. Deeply imbued with the superstitions of their country, they considered that to have failed in giving a "clane jump" through the bonfire on May-eve to be a sure precursor of sorrow for the ensuing year.

“An’ airly this mornin’,” she continued, “I dhreamt that I was dancin’ round the Maypole, whin all at wanst I looked up an’ seen Fergus Roche hangin’ from the top av it! I give a big screech an’ wakened up, an’ it’s God’s thruth I’m tellin’ whin I say I heerd Fergus’s voice callin’ me!”

“Lord have marcy on him!” fervently ejaculated one of the group, whilst they all crossed themselves devoutly.

“Then,” said Norah, her eyes sparkling, and her dark cheek visibly paling, “I jumped out o’ the bed an’ ran t’ the doore; an’ there, shure enough, I seen Fergus Roche runnin’ away down be the boreen.”

She ceased, overcome with excitement, and sank down trembling on the dewy sward. Her companions looked at her in awe, being too firm believers in the doctrine of fetches and all other supernatural visitants to doubt for one moment but that it was a spirit which had appeared to her. For Fergus Roche, the affianced lover of Nora Kinsellagh, had been a noted leader in the Irish rebellion of the

previous three years ; and, as far as they knew, then lay imprisoned in the fortress of Millmount, near Drogheda. Owing to the unsettled state of the country at the time—and especially to the changes in the Government—many of the trials were often delayed for several years. In the meantime, death, often hastened by ill-treatment, not unfrequently carried off the culprits ; a circumstance of so little importance to the prison officials, that years occasionally elapsed without the relatives and friends of the deceased persons being made aware of their deaths. And as the political prisoners who once entered the fatal gates of Millmount or old Newgate seldom, under any pretence whatever, left them alive, they were to all intents and purposes looked upon as dead to the world.

But at twenty, hope is strong in the human soul, and Norah Kinsellagh could not picture to herself her handsome, daring, and impulsive lover as being lost to her for ever. Regularly every morning and evening she repaired to the little whitewashed country chapel,

there to offer up so many *Paters* and *Aves* for her beloved. Nearly two years had elapsed without any tidings of him, yet Norah had felt strangely confident that eventually he would return to her, until that disturbing dream of hers on May-eve.

“Norah, avourneen, rouse yerself,” exclaimed one of the girls good-naturedly, “don’t yeh know that dhramas always goes be conthraries ! It’s marrid you an’ Fergus will be afther all. Ye’ll see us all dancin’ at the weddin’ !” and she executed an impromptu jig. Laughter and sadness are very closely allied in the Celtic mind, and it was no evidence either of heartlessness or want of sympathy when these merry maidens all joined in the dance—Norah amongst them—and footed it gaily to the time-honoured tune of “The Priest in his boots,” which one of their number carolled forth in a voice clear, strong, and sweet as a blackbird’s.

Lightly they danced, their joyous raillery and laughter floating on the still morning air. The rosy morn, the lovely landscape,

and the fresh country girls, all combined to form a pleasant picture; but not so thought a man who crouched low in a bush white with the May, which stood on the verge of the wood whence the Tolka bank sloped to the river.

“Fool! fool! that I was to trust her!” he exclaimed wrathfully to himself, his stern, handsome face distorted with raging jealousy. “Norah Kinsellagh couldn’t dance like that if she was in trouble about my fate!”

Suddenly the girls ceased dancing, and looked intently towards the high road which skirted the side of the wood. The clattering of horses’ hoofs was heard, and a cloud of dust loomed in view, whence soon emerged a troop of cavalry, who advanced at full speed, the morning sun glittering upon their uniforms and cumbrous horse-trappings. The man in the whitethorn bush cowered lower as the girls advanced to the side of the road and stood so near him that he could hear their remarks.

“It’s them murtherin’ sojers! Bad win’



to them!" said one of the girls, viciously. "What mischief are they up to now, I wonther?"

"They're comin' from the Dhrogheda road. Och! if one could only say a few words to them!" exclaimed Norah Kinsellagh, with a little sigh.

"They're comin' over t' spaik to us," whispered another, as the officer in command approached the girls. Waving his hand to them familiarly, he reined in his horse close to the bank where they stood, and said—

"My pretty girls, can you tell me if I am near the village of Finglas?"

"It's yourself that is, sir. Just go to the brow o' the hill there, an' ye'll see it in the holla below."

"Thank you; and now, perhaps, you can tell me where Farmer Roche lives?"

"Yis, sir, that white house on the top o' the hill with the haycock at the side—that's Brian Roche's."

During this colloquy, the officer's gaze had been riveted upon the lovely face of Norah

Kinsellagh in that critical manner which modest women resent as an impertinence, and which is one and is meant to be so. At the mention of Brian Roche's name, she raised her eyes, then, springing upon the top of the bank, and laying her hand upon the horse's bridle, she asked impulsively—

“Sir—oh, sir—maybe yeh can tell me somethin' about Fergus?”

“Fergus! My pretty maiden, who is Fergus? Your lover—eh?”

Norah crimsoned painfully.

“Fergus Roche, sir, that's in prison in Dhrogheda.”

“You must not ask such questions,” he replied, with provoking coolness, but then, seeing the look of blank disappointment, he added good-naturedly, “I am going to stay in your village for a day or two, and hope to see you again, and talk about Fergus perhaps. Good-by.”

And waving his hand to the girls, he rode quickly down the road, followed by his men.

The then unsettled state of the country

was such that to have a detachment of troops quartered in the neighbourhood excited very little surprise; therefore, as soon as the soldiers were fully out of sight, the girls gave them no further thought. They turned and walked down the bank, rifling the pastures of the yellow May flowers—or plubbesthiens, as they are called by the peasantry of the district—and returned to the village laden with wild flowers of every description wherewith to deck the May-pole. It was a tall slender shaft, like the mast of a ship, and stood—within the memory of the writer—upon a small piece of green sward at the side of the rustic bridge which spans the little river flowing through the village. It was one of the two chief May-poles of Dublin, the other being situated at Harold's-cross, to the south of the city. During the whole of May Day, the village girls, assisted by others from the surrounding country parts, were busily engaged in dressing it up with garlands of flowers and streamers of ribbon or gaudy silk. The latter decoration was easily procured

from "The Liberties," the most ancient and densely-populated part of Dublin. For in that locality resided a number of French silk weavers, who had fled from the Huguenotic persecutions of France many years before, and had settled in Ireland, a country always ready to sympathise with refugees of the faith. As evening drew near, the whole population of the village, young and old, might be seen congregated upon the spot, whilst Shamus Raffety, the blind piper, "discoorsed" many a merry tune, to which the young men and maidens danced merrily.

"Come, Norah, come an' take a turn wid me," said a young man, approaching Norah Kinsellagh, who stood a little apart from the dancers.

"I would, an' welcome, Dinis, agra, only me heart isn't in it. I can't help thinkin' them sodgers that kem this mornin' is afther no good. Is it throe that the captain an' some av his men is stayin' at Brian Roche's?"

"It is, Norah, alannah, it is, an' whisper—

what would yeh say if I tould you that Fergus escaped out of prison, an' the sodgers is lookin' for him?"

The girl's face grew deadly pale with emotion. Grasping Denis's arm, she said, hoarsely—

"How d'ye know, Dinis—are yeh sure?"

"I was at Dhrogheda market yistherda', an' heerd it, an' that some sodgers was t' be sint t' Finglas for feerd Fergus would make his way home."

"Glory be t' God!" she ejaculated, fervently, at the same time crossing herself devoutly. "If Fergus is once outside the walls of the jail he's sure t' escape!"

"Norah," said Denis, earnestly, "I didn't tell this t' nobody but yerself an' ould Brian Roche. The sodgers says nothin' about why they're stayin' here, an' these is quare times, so I thought I had betther keep a still tongue in me head."

"Dinis!" she exclaimed, suddenly, "I seen Fergus this mornin' airly. I thought I heerd him callin' me, an' I jumped up an' ran

t' the dure, an' I seen him, or some wan, runnin' like mad down be the boreen."

"God keep him out of the hands of the sodgers. If he's catched now, he'll have no chance at all, at all."

Norah was about to reply, when shouts from the dancers caused her to look around. She saw that the merriment was caused by a number of the soldiers having joined in the rustic sports. The very sight of them filled her with terror, and her heart died within her as she thought of the risk her lover ran. She could not bring herself to mingle with the dancers, so, thanking Denis for his news, she quickly slipped away unobserved, and wandered almost mechanically along the shady road leading to Brian Roche's. The farmhouse was situated but a short distance from the village, and Norah had proceeded about half way when she met Captain Hatton, the officer who had spoken to her in the morning.

He was a handsome fellow, but to the unhappy girl no person could have appeared

more objectionable or awe-inspiring at that moment. Advancing towards her with a bold stare of impertinent familiarity, he said—

“Ah! my pretty girl, were you coming to look for me? Come back now, I want you to dance with me around the May-pole.”

“No,” she replied, “thank yeh, sir, but I’m not goin’ t’ dance this evenin’.”

“Nonsense,” said he, looking on her with undisguised admiration—“come along with me now,” and as he spoke he tried to put his arm around her waist.

Norah drew herself away; her dark grey passionate eyes flashed ominously, as with a withering glance of contempt she pursued her way towards Brian Roche’s. But her tormentor was a carpet knight, as skilled in love as in warlike tactics. The flashing eyes of the rustic beauty only incited him all the more; and with the intention of conquering her haughty reserve he followed her up the road.

She left the beaten highway, and got over a stile. The captain followed her. They

were now in a narrow, grass-grown lane, high thorn hedges, white with the May, on either side—a veritable lovers' walk, and the hero shrewdly suspected that Norah, with the inherent coquetry of woman, had purposely lured him to that secluded spot. Flattered and emboldened by this thought, he came to her side again, and this time tried to snatch a kiss.

With a scream, the girl suddenly darted aside, trying to elude his grasp, and at that moment a man suddenly sprang from behind a thick thorn bush, and stood before them. He was a tall, wretched-looking creature, shoeless and stockingless, seemingly with no garments save a pair of ragged corduroy trousers and an old frieze overcoat. The remnants of a red handkerchief were tied around his head and begrimed face; yet, despite his uncouth appearance, Norah recognised her lover, Fergus Roche.

It was a desperate moment. She saw the officer's keen eye rest upon the man with a

scrutinising gaze. Quick as thought her ready wit came to her aid, and, before Fergus could speak, she said with an admirable affectation of innocence—

“Ah, thin, is it here you are, Saura? Yer honour,” she added in an undertone, but loud enough for Fergus to hear, “this is only Saura Hoolaghan, a quarther clift* poor crathur.”

“A what?” asked Captain Hatton, in amazement.

“A quarther clift—he hasn’t right sinse—he goes wandhering about the counthry, but he’s a harmless poor fool.”

“Oh, indeed,” said he, moving a little away. “And now, my man, what do you want here?”

Fergus, who had seen the *ruse* practised by Norah, replied, with an idiotic leer—

“I’m goin’ t’ see de May-pole.”

Norah could not tell whether he was in earnest or not. Possibly, she thought, he

* An idiot, or kind of half-witted creature.

was not aware that the soldiers were in such close pursuit of him; and in agony lest he should venture among them, she exclaimed—

“Saura, agra, take my advice, an’ don’t go. Yeh know the boys makes fun av yeh, an’ there’s a lot av sodgers there, and they’ll be only laughin’ at yeh, and callin’ yeh ‘Saura, the fool.’”

Fergus took the hint.

“Well, I won’t, Miss Norah, but I want somethin’ t’ ait; I’m that hungry.”

With difficulty the girl restrained her emotion.

“God help yeh, Saura! Arrah, maybe this gintleman would give yeh a tinpinny.”

“Done!” exclaimed Captain Hatton, eagerly; “not alone a tenpenny but a golden guinea if you will give me a kiss, Norah?”

She hesitated for a moment. It flashed like lightning across her brain that if Fergus was obliged to wander about the country for any length of time, a guinea would be an unspeakable boon to him. Giving the hypo-

thetical Saura a meaning look unseen by the captain, she said coquettishly—

“ Ah ! shure I don’t know whether ye’re in airnest or not. Av I thought yeh wor, I’d give yeh the kiss, for a guinea would get a couple iv little pigs for Saura an’ his ould mother.”

“ Here it is,” he replied, hastily producing the money ; “ but I shall also ask you to come and dance round the May-pole with me.”

“ Throth I will, sir,” said Norah with surprising alacrity.

To tell the truth she had been debating in her mind as to how she could get him away to a safe distance and so leave the field clear for Fergus to escape.

She kissed the captain and received in exchange a guinea and a tenpenny. Handing them to the astonished Fergus, she said—

“ Now, Saura, mind yeh give the money t’ yer mother.”

“ Perhaps you had better take care of it yourself,” suggested the captain.

“ No,” she replied gravely, “ he’s a quare crathur, an’ I dunno but he might do somethin’ t’ me av I vexed him.”

The officer thought it quite time to leave such questionable company ; moreover, the evening was waning, and if they delayed any longer there would be but little time to enjoy the sports around the May-pole.

“ Well, then, give him the money, and come down to the village.”

“ Yis, sir, in a minnit.” Then turning to Fergus she said impressively : “ Saura, the sodgers is stayin’ up at Brian Roche’s, so don’t go near it or they’ll only be makin’ fun of you—good-bye, avick, an’ go home now.”

“ I will, Miss Norah, I will,” and, idiotically rattling the money between his dirty palms, he cleared the hedge with one bound, and was soon out of sight.

Norah kept her promise. No maiden danced more merrily that evening than she did ; and as for her flirtations with the captain ! why every one was scandalised. Ah,

little they recked of the anxious, aching heart whence the light laughter and merry jests proceeded.

“The young May moon” was shedding her soft beams o’er the landscape as Norah Kinsellagh parted from Captain Hatton at her father’s door that night; and about the same time a vessel bound for America weighed anchor from Custom House Quay, Dublin, having Fergus Roche for part of its living freight. The captain of the ship—a fierce patriot—was only too glad to help him to escape, and when making the same passage nearly two years afterwards, he brought out with him Norah Kinsellagh, who became the blooming bride of Fergus Roche immediately upon her arrival in the New World. Years afterwards, when sitting round the fire in their log hut in the backwoods, they often repeated to their children and grandchildren the story of their youth. Many a hearty laugh resounded as Norah recounted how she had, upon that eventful evening, made

love to and successfully engaged the attention of the captain until she had thought Fergus had had time to have been at a safe distance.

They now sleep their last long sleep on a green hillside in Lower Canada. Of them it might have been said :—

“ Beautiful and pleasant in their lives,
In their deaths they were not divided.”

DEAN SWIFT'S GHOST.

Two or three miles from the city of Dublin flows the river Tolka, which takes its course through Finglas, through Glasnevin, Drumcondra, and Richmond, and finally mingles its waters with those of the sea where it emerges from beneath Ballybough Bridge. What wonderful memories does not the name conjure up! The wild doings of the rollicking Tolka Club, and the traditions of the orgies of the still more formidable and famous Hell-Fire Club (which latter held its meetings in a lonely house amongst the marshes near the mouth of the river), yet furnish tales which are told around many a winter's fire. The marshes have long since been reclaimed, and streets and manufactories flourish there now. The Dublin and Drogheda Railway runs not a stone's throw from the identical spot where

the Hell-Fire Club-house once stood ; and not many years ago we assisted at a “ house-warming ” in its vicinity, where the marvellous legends concerning the club—told by an old gentleman who, when a boy, had bathed in the sea, which used to flow where we were then sitting—were only equalled by the avidity with which we listened to them.

“ The right royal Tolka,” associated with the classic name of Furlong the poet, who sleeps his last in Drumcondra churchyard ; with the names of Sheridan, of Tickell, of Parnell ; of Addison, who, in sight of the river, composed “ Cato ” whilst walking up and down the yew-tree walk, in what are now the Botanic Gardens ; the favourite haunt of good old Doctor Delaney ; and last and chiefly sacred from associations with Doctor Jonathan Swift, and the Stella whose name he has rendered immortal.

Barring the public-house as you cross the bridge—we do not mean Mary White’s—there is no fashionable or even very moderate architecture in all Glasnevin. Although so

near the metropolis, it is about one of the most primitive and characteristic Irish villages you could wish to see. Standing on Glasnevin Bridge with your back to Dublin, the Botanic Gardens lie to the left; beyond them the great national cemetery, where the chaste and noble monument to the memory of "the Liberator" rears its imposing head. To the right lies Drumcondra; whilst straight before you, and half-way up the village street, stands the house that was once the residence of Esther Johnson, *i.e.* Stella. See, the huge wooden gates are open, and afford a good view of the house. It is simply an old-fashioned country residence, slightly modernized. Beneath are cellars, in which tradition says "the Drapier Letters" were first privately printed. The loving, passionate heart that ached and broke there has long since mouldered away; but the memory of her pathetic and unhappy life yet lingers in the minds of many of the inhabitants.

It cannot but be admitted that an Irishman almost invariably looks at only one side

of a question. As a general rule, his judgment may be said to be of the feminine gender ; for in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, it is biassed by his feelings. Keeping this estimate in view, it is not to be wondered at that the popular idea of Dean Swift's conduct with reference to Stella is, that it was one unbroken career of unmitigated villainy.

Few take the trouble, or are indeed capable, of looking beyond the surface, therefore they fail to detect that it is not improbable that, in the subtle workings of his wondrous mind, there were deeper depths of love for her than even she could fathom. The possible knowledge and consequent horror of his impending madness ought to be sufficient apology for any eccentricities. And he, in his deep love for Stella, and his stern sense of justice towards humanity, would not incur the probability of embittering her life by an outbreak of his malady, nor would he run the risk of entailing the curse upon future generations.

Be all that as it may, you would hardly find one of the "ould residenthers" in or about Glasnevin to give heed to you. So that when it was generally reported that the ghost of Dean Swift was to be seen every night taking the air upon the high bank of the Tolka, between Glasnevin and Drumcondra, and in the fields at the back of Stella's former residence, why, the story was implicitly believed in by a large majority; and the current opinion was, that his reverence's ghost was thus doomed to perambulate the neighbourhood as a punishment for his cruel conduct towards his lady-love.

The then sexton of Drumcondra was "a very knowledgeable man." Of incalculable years, even middle-aged people could scarcely remember when Kelly's white head had not been associated in their minds with the sleepy, droning service of Drumcondra church.

Ah, Michael Kelly ! does not thy name recall the by-gone days when we sat in the old-fashioned square pew, with its high,

narrow, uncomfortable seats, from which our legs dangled ungracefully ; when we used to munch dry bread whilst the collection was being made !

Our pew was near the little tank in which Kelly sat, and whence he kept a watchful eye upon us youngsters, occasionally shaking his head and frowning ominously when our risibles defied all control, and a suppressed giggle went round the pew as some one of his peculiar modes of reading the responses struck us as being irresistibly comic. In his own opinion Kelly was a very important person indeed, and when in conversation with a stranger, he seldom failed to tell that he had, in his youth, been a sweetheart of Catherine Hayes's mother's ; and, consequently, " My dear sir, I was within an ace of being the father of the Swan of Erin ! "

To Kelly, then, in deference to his reputed learning, was the matter of the ghost referred one afternoon in the Glasnevin Botanical gardens. The June roses were flinging their fragrance upon the sultry summer air, already

laden with the burden of a thousand other sweet odours. A group of gardeners were working lazily a little apart from the space appropriated to the medicinal herbs, and near this latter place sauntered a young girl, the brightest blossom in the whole Botanical Gardens—merry, laughing Annie MacDermott. Nominally, Annie was studying botany under the superintendence of Tom Hamilton, a tall, good-looking young fellow of about seven-and-twenty, who walked beside her. He was a Clerk in Dublin Castle, and being an enthusiastic botanist and very much in love, the greater portion of his spare time was spent in the gardens, where he cultivated science and Annie MacDermott's acquaintance at the same time.

We shall not intrude upon their studies at present, but approach the gardeners, and hear what Kelly has to say about the ghost.

"I'm greatly exercised in me mind consarnin' it," said Kelly. "I've been forty-five years livin' in the na'borhood, an' I never heerd tell av the like before."

"An' d'ye think it's a raal live ghost, Misther Kelly?" inquired a gardener's man. "Yeh have the larnin', an' ought t' know bettther nor the likes av uz."

"That's a logical question," replied Kelly, with an expression of preternatural gravity; "an' only reducible an' deducible be the laws o' logic. Me sintimints wid regard t' the supernathral visithor wud purtake av the nathur av an hypothesis, an', such bein' the case, cudn't possibly lade t' a verification or idintification."

"Tundher-an'-oun's! Misther Kelly, av yeh wor t' go an' meet the ghost, an' say all thim grand hard words t' him, why yeh'd be the ruination av him complately! The priest himself cudn't bate yeh."

"I wish some wan 'ud sind the sperrit t' the right-about!" exclaimed another man. "Me ould woman sez she seen it the other night, an' ever sence she's afeard av findin' herself dead in her bed in the mornin'."

"They say it's no less nor the immortal remains av ould Dane Swift," said the first.

speaker. "He put his commedher an a young woman that lived beyant there in the town, an' thin thrated her very onhan'some; so the pinance he's condimmed t' do is to come back and hear what people sez about him."

"The Dane was a powerful clever man," sententiously remarked Kelly, with the air of an appreciative sympathiser with genius. "Another grate pote, called Shakespeare, was discribin' the way the Dane praiched wanst, an' he said :

"The pulpit, dhrum ecclesiastic,
He bet wid his fist, instid iv a stick."

"Well, now, only listen t' that!" admirably exclaimed one of his auditors. "Bud here's another larned gintleman—Misther Hamilton; maybe he can tell us somethin' about it."

Tom Hamilton, whose lady-love had gone off with some friends, now joined the group, his hands full of botanical specimens. The question of the ghost being referred to him,

he laughed heartily, and addressing a quiet-looking gardener who had not yet spoken, he said :

“ Jack Cassidy, you live up on the Tolka Bank ; you ought to be able to tell us something about this ghost. Have you ever seen it ? ”

“ Yis, sir, often and often ! An’ be me word, it isn’t me that’s consaited av th’ acquaintance aither ! There he goes, meanderin’ about wid his black cassock, an’ his black heart, too ; that ye can see in his ugly face.”

“ Are you not afraid of that ghost, Jack ? ”

“ Yeh may well ax that, sir. The sorra dhry screed there’s an me sometimes wid the pasp’ration ! Me business brings me out at ontimely hours, and only I’m dhruv to it, the sorra bit o’ me ’ud go in the way av seein’ the ould naygar ! ” And Jack put his working implements into the barrow and wheeled it away, thereby avoiding any further conversation. Tom Hamilton was furthermore informed that there was not a “ boy ” in or

about Glasnevin who would venture alone along the Tolka Bank after nightfall.

Sure enough, in a few days Tom found that all the barony was talking about the ghost, and the united testimony of the district went to confirm the report that a supernatural visitor of some kind or other haunted the Tolka Bank. He was told this one evening as he came home from Dublin on the top of the tram-car ; but the subject soon dropped out of his mind, for he was on his way to take tea at Drumcondra, where he expected to meet Annie MacDermott.

Yes, Annie was there, looking distractingly pretty in a thick white *piqué* dress. According to her wont, she snubbed Tom most unmercifully ; laughed at him when he recounted the latest intelligence concerning the ghost ; and succeeded in putting him into such a whirl of alternate despair and delight, that when the hour for departure came, and her brother had not arrived to take her home, his happiness was consummated by her graciously accepting his escort to Glasnevin.

It was a sultry night, and Annie wore no wrappings save a white, cloud-like woollen shawl. The moon shone clearly, revealing every object as distinctly as in the noonday. When they came to the corner, Annie said :

“I wish you would come home by the Tolka Bank ; it is by far the shortest way ; moreover, we might have a chance of seeing Dean Swift’s ghost.”

Now, it was all very well for lively Annie to make such a suggestion, but some people are nervous where the supernatural is in question, and Tom was one of these unfortunates. He was truly in a dilemma. Should he face the probabilities of meeting the ghost, or run the gauntlet of Annie’s quizzing ? Somehow or other he had an instinctive feeling that women despised cowards, so mustering up all his courage, he said bravely :

“By all means ! let us go that way.”

They walked along for a little time, chatting gaily, and at last Annie remarked :

“That stupid old ghost ! I wonder he does

not join us. I am sure it would be far more pleasant than going about by himself."

Tom, whose head was as soft as his heart, was incoherently muttering some sentimental reply as to the pleasure of their being only in each other's company, when his companion grasped his arm tightly, and, with a gasp, exclaimed hoarsely :

" Good heavens ! Tom, *there* it is ! "

They were standing just behind a little belt of pines, whence they could see without being seen. The girl trembled violently. Tom, paralysed with terror, stood grasping her hand ; neither could move.

On it came—a rather tall figure walking slowly and deliberately. By the clear moonlight, the watchers were enabled to distinguish every detail distinctly—the white stern face ; the shovel-hat ; the long, old-fashioned, clerical coat ; the knee-breeches and gaiters ; the shoes with buckles ; the book which it carried, and which it was, to all appearance, intently perusing. It was within a yard of

the corner where Tom and Annie stood, when the latter, unable to control her over-wrought feelings, gave a faint moan, just as the ghost came face to face with her.

Strange, most strange, but oh, most true ! The ghost dropped its book, its teeth chattered audibly, its knees knocked together, and it exclaimed in a rich brogue :

“ Och, holy St. Dinis ! what’s this for at-all-at-all ! Here’s a raal ghost comin’ t’ take me aff fur purtindin’ t’ be wan av his fambily ! Och, shure, av it’s jealous yeh are, I’ll nivir come here agin ! ”

“ Jack Cassidy ! ” ejaculated Annie.

“ Jack Cassidy ! ” ejaculated Tom. And they both came forward.

“ Be the powers, it’s Mistor Hamilton an’ Miss Annie ! ” And here the ghost (*sic*) twirled its shovel-hat in the air, and turned a swift, but most unclerical caper. “ Shure it’s meself thought yerself was a ghost, Miss Annie, alannah ! standin’ there in yer white frock.”

“ Jack, you ought to be ashamed of your-

self!" exclaimed Annie indignantly. "I'll tell papa, and he'll have you punished."

"'Troth an' he won't, Miss Annie, jewil! for yer papa is wan av the people that pays me fur bein' a ghost. Where wud yer sthrawberries an' yer flowers an' Misther Campbell's beauty-ful roses up there at the nursery be, av it wasn't that the chaps is afeard av the ghost? The few polis can't be everywhere at wanst, and nivir fear, they know all about it. So don't brathe a word, Miss Annie, alannah, or ye'll hindher a boy from airnin' an honest penny."

Annie, now at ease, recognised the ghost's attire to be a suit of clothes belonging to her father, who was a collector of curiosities, so that the undoubted identification of the Dean of St. Patrick by the graybeards of the district was a natural sequence of the apparition.

* * * *

Since that evening Michael Kelly has himself actually seen the ghost. Many are the marvellous tales which he relates concerning

it, proving them according to his own "logic," whilst Tom and Annie gravely listen. These two have a pleasant home of their own now, near Drumcondra, and when strolling along the bank of the Tolka—and in the broad daylight—they have more than once beheld "Dean Swift's Ghost."

“DENIS DHUV.”

AN IRISH LEGEND.

ON the side of an Irish mountain—the Reek of Croagh Patrick, away in the wilds of West Connaught—a man lay, apparently lifeless, his fair curls bedraggled and drenched by the pitiless pelting of the sudden summer shower. Presently the rain ceased, and the June sun shone out blindingly, cruelly scorching the man’s upturned face, and drying the blood which seemed to flow from a wound at the back of his head. The raindrops which quivered upon the scanty mountain vegetation were quickly dried up, and the glaring, searching sun showed the shadow of every slender bent blade and tuft of heather. The pretty *Erica Mediterranea*, which grows in abundance at the base of Croagh Patrick,

becomes rarer as the summit of the mountain is gained; consequently, there being but slight obstruction, the faint breeze which arose was sufficient to send the man's hat rolling down the slope. On and on it went, as heedless as any other unthinking thing—animate or inanimate—in its downward course; and never stopped until it rested amongst the nettles which grow in luxuriant profusion around the mouldering ruins of Murrisk Abbey, that lies at the foot of the mountain.

“Glory be t' God!”

The ejaculation proceeded from a tall gipsy-looking girl, who was gathering nettles in the old churchyard. She had the true Irish eye—

——“the greenest of things blue,
The bluest of things grey,”

and masses of dark curling hair loosely gathered into one knot at the back of her bare head. She wore coarse country-made brogues, a short scarlet petticoat, and a small shawl crossed over her bosom. Stepping



briskly through the nettles, she took up the hat, and her changeful eyes dilated as she exclaimed in an awe-stricken voice—

“Saints above us! it’s full av wet blud!” Then, with the quick-wittedness of her race, she continued, “It’s some poor craythur up an the Reek.”

Putting her bag of nettles in a place of safety, Honor Costigan ascended the slope of Croagh Patrick, with a foot as sure and as fleet as one of her own mountain goats.

Long and diligently she searched, yet the red sun was sinking to its rest in “the underworld” beyond the western main, ere she had had time to summon her father and brother, and help them in carrying the insensible man to their cabin.

“We’re in luck’s way!” said Honor, whose sharp ears had caught the sound of the click of a horse’s hoofs coming along the road. “I’ll go bail that’s Denis Dhuv. I’ll sind him aff for Docthor Sharpe.”

She ran to the cabin door, just as a young man dismounted from a shaggy mountain

pony. Denis Kinselagh, or Denis Dhuv (*i.e.*, Black Denis)—as he was commonly called, from his dark complexion and lowering brow—looked what he really was, a well-to-do small farmer. He was about the middle height, muscular, and with handsome features: a thin, clearly-cut mouth and nostrils, which quivered with every emotion; but there was a lurking demon in his black eyes, which made little children run from him, and mothers instinctively clasp their babes closer and cross themselves, whenever Denis Dhuv drew near. No neighbour ever asked him for the loan of a plough or a cart; he never was seen at wedding, christening, or wake; the priest never dropped in to see him in a friendly way; the few tenants upon his land would beg or borrow their rent rather than ask him for a respite upon gale-day; he was feared, and he knew it, and laughed at it.

Yet this was the man whom bright, beautiful, impulsive Honor Costigan loved with all the fervour of her loving nature. A pretty picture she looked, as she stood in the door-



way, her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkling with excitement. With a man's vanity he ascribed it solely to her joy at seeing him, and said, as he tied his pony's bridle to a post—

“I didn't think I'd be so late at Slieve fair. I suppose ye wor lookin' out for me?”

“Well, t' tell the truth, I wasn't,” she replied; “for me father, an' Pat, an' me was carryin' a gintleman down that we found lyin' an the mountain. Denis, jewil, will yeh go for Docthor Sharpe? We're afeared the poor gintleman's dead!”

“Dead dhrunk most likely,” said he cynically; “let me see him.”

He entered the cabin, and proceeded unceremoniously to the inner room, where lay the body on “the bed.”

Pat Costigan was trying to force some whisky between the white lips. His efforts were crowned with success, for as Denis and Honor entered, the man feebly moaned, and turned his head.

“Thank God he's not dead!” fervently ejaculated the girl. “Denis, darlint,” she

whispered, "will yeh ride aff for Docthor Sharpe at wanst?" And she followed him as he abruptly left the room.

"Yer in a wondherful state about this gintleman wid his white hands and his goold chain!" said he with an ugly sneer on his face. "D'ye know he's only a man from London that dhraws pictures, and that's lodgin' beyant on the coast. Phew! he isn't worth savin'!"

Honor's grey eyes flashed.

"I'll go meself," said she indignantly, taking down her blue cloak from the nail on which it hung. "Me father is too ould t' go quick enough, an' Pat can't lave the gintleman! Throth, I'm ashamed av yeh, Dinis!"

"It's you that does look purty when yer vexed," he remarked quietly; "put up yer cloak, alannah; I'll go for Docthor Sharpe."

Notwithstanding the care of Doctor Sharpe, and the unremitting attention of the brave, warm-hearted girl who had found him on the mountain, many weeks elapsed before the stranger was able to be up and about again.

Harold Singleton was, as Denis Dhuv had said, a painter; moreover, he was a kind-hearted, genial, chivalrous gentleman. He soon saw how matters stood between Honor and Denis, and often good-humouredly bantered the girl about her black-looking lover.

After some time, he sent to his lodgings for his drawing materials, and said to Honor one day—

“Honor, how would you like to have a picture of yourself to give to Denis?”

“I’d like it well, sur,” she replied; “but could yeh put the likes av me into a picture?”

“I’ll do my best,” said he, laughing at her simplicity; “but first you must let me settle your hair in my own way; take it all down.”

Honor removed the horn comb, and her hair fell in heavy masses over her shoulders. Harold Singleton was looping it up artistically, when a shadow darkened the doorway, and Denis Dhuv said—

“Honor, I want you.”

“Don’t tell him about the picture,” whis-

pered Harold, bending over her; "it would spoil all."

She gave him a quick glance of intelligence, and hastily twisting up her hair, followed Denis Dhuv out of the house. To her amazement, he said nothing; but taking her roughly by the arm, led her down by the side of the boreen, until they were out of sight of the cottage. There was an ominous look on his dark face, as he asked in a voice of suppressed rage—

"How dare yeh let that fellow touch yer hair! D'ye mane to marry me, or t' go aff wid him?"

"Arrah, Dinis agra!" said she coaxingly. "don't be so crass! Av coorse I'm goin' t' marry yeh as soon as we can get the money together, t' get Father Mahony to say the few words for us. Don't mind the gintleman; he didn't mane no harm. It was my fault, Dinis; he axed me t' let him settle me hair his own way."

"Mhonia-mon-dioul!" he exclaimed; "he axed t' settle yer hair, an' yeh let him, an'

yeh as good as marrid t’ me ! I’ll tell yeh what it is, Honor ; afther that, yeh’ll niver call me husband. G’off wid yer grand gintleman lover, and let him settle yer hair for yeh !”

The girl became deadly pale. Wildly flinging her arms around her lover, she cried—

“Dinis ! Dinis ! for the love av Heaven, don’t talk that-a-way ! Misther Singleton didn’t mane no harm ; come back t’ him an’ ax him, av yeh don’t b’lieve me !”

But the demons of suspicion and jealousy had been working in his breast for some time past, and at last had burst their bonds. He loved Honor as much as it was in his nature to love any human creature, but being by nature distrustful, he could not give her credit for feelings in which he was himself wanting.

“I seen enough,” he replied ; “I don’t want t’ go back. An’ iviry time I come up in the evenin’ I see him laughin’ and talkin’ t’ yeh. Go aff to him now, yer grand gintleman lover, wid his white hands an’ his smooth

tongue, an' may my heavy curse light upon yeh both !”

He turned, and would have left her, but she only clasped him the more tightly, exclaiming—

“Dinis ! me own darlint Dinis, that I love betther nor me own heart's blood ! I tell yeh there was no harm in what the gintleman did ; he was only settlin' me hair t' put me in a picthur for you. That's God's thruth, Dinis, but he towld me not t' tell yeh !”

“That's the ind av it !” said he, roughly disengaging her clinging hands ; “yer only tellin' more an yerself. Yer a bad, ondacent girl, t' have a saycret wid one man, an' going to be married t' another. I've done wid yeh !” and waving his hand, he went rapidly down the road, and was soon out of sight.

The miserable girl was too much stunned to follow him. There she stood gazing at the turn of the road where she last beheld him. With the strange perversity of her impulsive woman's nature, she seemed to love him all the more, the more he acted differently

from other men. Honor had had lovers in plenty, and any one of them she could have done pretty much as she had liked with; but Denis Dhuv had always cowed her, mastered her, and seemed to exert a strange fascination over her. She saw his faults, and, woman-like, she loved them because they were his. Harold Singleton she thoroughly liked—no one could but do so—yet no thought towards him which would have been disloyal to her lover had ever crossed her pure mind.

The painter knew that; he had lived long enough amongst men and women, and had studied them too keenly, not to be able to see through Honor's transparent and innocent nature; and he respected the ignorant untutored girl as he had respected few women since that awful day two years before, when he had laid his fair young wife, with her baby at her breast, in her last home in Highgate Cemetery.

Honor sat down on a bank behind a ditch, her head resting upon her knees. She was accustomed to Denis' evil tempers, and tried

to persuade herself that this ebullition would pass off, and that she would meet him at chapel as usual the next Sunday morning; she took no heed of the passing time, and did not note that the evening shadows grew longer and longer, and that the daylight paled and paled, and then faded away from the face of heaven. She was too much occupied by her conflicting thoughts, and started violently when a voice beside her said—

“Why, Honor! is this you?—all alone? Where is Denis?”

The speaker was Harold Singleton.

“Dinis wint away, sur,” she replied with a sort of sob in her voice, which was not lost upon her hearer. He sat down beside her, and gradually drew from her the whole story. He was one of those sympathetic men that women instinctively feel are good, and in whom they unhesitatingly confide. Soon the poor girl’s feelings found relief in tears. He strove to soothe her, and said, as he stood up—

“Come—come now, Honor! I shall be

leaving this in a day or so, but trust to me to try and set matters straight for you before I go.”

Denis Dhuv, behind the hedge, had come up just in time to hear that last speech, and nothing of what had preceded it.

* * * * *

The early morning of a bright August day. The sun has as yet hardly warmed the earth, so there is the freshness of the dew pervading the atmosphere. The bleat of the mountain goats, and the busy hum of gold-ringed bees amongst the heather, alone break the morning stillness. The flag of the truce of the peace of God seems to be unfurled over the land, so calm and still does everything appear. Presently the door of Pat Costigan's cottage is opened noiselessly, and Honor appears, and is proceeding to release a number of fowls from a shed at the side of the cottage, when, to her unfeigned astonishment, Denis Dhuv advances from behind the hedge, and says—

"Honor, will you forgive me for those hasty words last night?"

How her loving heart bounds with joy! He has come back to her!—her love!—the one she has singled from the world!

"Och, Dinis! shure an' I know'n yeh worn't in airnest! Misther Singleton himself was goin' to talk t' yeh to-day."

She is in his arms as he speaks, and he holds her more tightly as she concludes. Timidly she raises her glowing, beautiful face to his dark one, and kisses him. He does not respond to the caress, but says—

"To show yeh I bear no ill-will, I want to take him over to Achill Island to-day. He said he wanted t' see the cliffs there. An' you must come too, Honor."

At breakfast time the proposal was made to Harold Singleton. He did not care to go that day, but the good-natured fellow, thinking it might be a means of consummating the reconciliation between the lovers, consented to it with apparent alacrity.

A simple luncheon, supplemented by a bottle

of poteen, was stowed away in the boat along with the sketching materials, and they soon landed upon bleak, sea-girt Achill. They passed through the curious little village of Dugort, with its cabins built and roofed with round uncemented stones, and after a long and brisk walk, arrived at the famous cliffs of Minnean, which rise sheer from the Atlantic to a height of nearly one thousand feet. Here they paused and sat down, the painter enjoying the view of the Maam Thomas mountains on the northern coast of Clew Bay, and Clare Island, ten miles away, whilst his companions busied themselves in setting forth the luncheon.

“How high are these cliffs?” inquired Harold, standing up.

“Betchune nine hundhred and tin hundhred feet,” said Denis, approaching the edge of the precipice; “listen t’ the water roarin’ among the rocks below.”

Harold approached the edge of the cliff and leaned over, giving his hand to Denis for safety in order to keep him steady. Honor

was looking on at the whole scene : her heart stood still, for instinctively she seemed to know what was about to happen. She could not give a warning cry, for her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth ; but when she saw Denis Dhuv hurl Harold Singleton over the brink to inevitable destruction, she knew that it was for that purpose he had brought him to the cliffs of Minnean.

“He’ll never stan’ in me way again,” said he hoarsely, as he approached where she stood, white and motionless as a statue.

“You black-hearted villain !” she exclaimed, recoiling from him, all her love turned to hate. “I’ll go back to Connaught, an’ from the Killeries down to Kilkee I’ll tell what ye done ; an’ av yeh don’t swing for it, me name isn’t Honor Costigan !”

“Say that agin !” he yelled, “and ye’ll go afther him. I swore to meself last night that I’d have me revenge on him ! Take back yer words, or I’ll throw yeh over afther him !”

He drew her near the edge of the cliff as

he spoke. She shrieked and struggled to get free ; but, save the answering echoes, there was no sound beyond the dull booming of the angry waves which lashed the cliffs, and washed into their rocky bed the dead body of Harold Singleton. Honor almost succeeded in freeing herself from the grasp of Denis Dhuv ; in his efforts to keep her from escaping, he grasped her long blue cloak—the clasp with which such garments are usually fastened gave way—with the rebound she fell upon her face on the grass, whilst Denis Dhuv sprang backwards over the cliff, over the brink of which a few minutes before he had hurled his victim. The hungry waters seethed and surged, and soon washed into the rocky creek the mangled corpse of the murderer !

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In an obscure village in the west of Ireland there lives a poor, mad old woman, who goes by the name of “Foolish Honor.” People say she lost her reason from having witnessed

the accidental death of her lover and a gentleman who had accompanied them to Achill; for, since that awful day, Honor Costigan never spoke a rational word.

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY.

ABOUT the close of the eighteenth century, the fashionable life of Dublin was in its zenith; the Ranelagh Gardens were the resort of the beaux and belles of the day; the Parliament was held in College Green; and its members had their town residence in Dublin, and lived there for a considerable portion of the year.

One of the members, an illustrious Irish nobleman, who had spent some portion of his youth in Italy, was a man of cultivated taste and refinement. Upon his return to Dublin, he conceived the idea of inviting over some Italian artists to decorate the walls and ceilings of his residence after the Florentine manner. He carried out his idea, and the ornamentations of Charlemont House bear witness to the taste and skill of the decora-

tors. Other noblemen employed these artists ; the present Royal Irish Academy House, then a noble private residence, is similarly decorated ; also several other city mansions in several of the leading streets and squares.

When Dublin decreased in importance after the Act of Union in 1801, and was no longer the centre of fashion for the Irish nobility, its splendid private residences gradually decayed ; and wealthy burghers and Dublin's proverbially professional aristocracy, now inhabit them. Many of the houses yet retain their curious, rare old decorations, and of one of these residences, situated in a leading square, we would more especially speak.

A large, stately, gloomy-looking house, with a ponderous hall-door, studded with iron nails, like the door of a cathedral. High, narrow windows, with Italian jealousies. The grass grows in the interstices of the high, steep steps, now fast falling away. The rusty iron railings have become loosened in their stone settings, and seem as though a good push would hurl them into the moulder-

ing, vault-like areas. Entering the hall, a damp, earthy smell greets the intruder—for, intruder must any one be considered who ventures into that region of ghostliness. The wide, flagged, echoing hall, the broad, dark, oak-panneled staircase, lead to chambers awful in their oppressive sense of loneliness and utter desolation. Cobwebs festoon the painted walls; queer, crawling creatures hold high holiday on the once polished floors; but not even the squeak of a rat or a mouse breaks the solemn, death-like stillness which pervades this old, deserted mansion.

“Over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper to the ear,
‘The house is haunted.’”

Twenty-five years ago this house was tenanted by Miss Steele, an eccentric old lady, who, dying suddenly at the advanced age of ninety-one, her property—including this house and furniture—came into the possession of a married grand-niece living in Kildare, whom she had never seen. The

season in Dublin was just commencing about the time that all preliminary law-matters connected with the property were being settled, and the heiress, Mrs. Nugent, acting upon the advice of her lawyer, resolved to let the house furnished. The furniture, although antique—was handsome; especially that of the drawing-room. The walls and ceilings of this apartment were superbly ornamented in the Florentine style. Arabesques on a pale blue ground adorned the ceilings; the panels of the walls were painted with groups of figures or rare pieces of still-life; whilst from the mouldings which separated these panels, sprang figures which, bending downwards, held the candelabra lighting the apartment. The furniture was in keeping with the architecture—of inlaid wood, heavy with gilding and upholstered in amber satin. It was of that stately and old-world type which suggested the days of minuets, apple-blossom sacques, cherry-coloured satin petticoats, and high-heeled shoes. A spindle-legged spinnet stood near

the fireplace, wherein was no grate, but huge brass dogs. The fireplace was tiled with the queer little Dutch tiles that came over with the tulips in the days of William and Mary. These tiles bore a succession of Adams and Eves, of Cains and Abels, and other scriptural characters, who looked sadly out of place amongst the nymphs, and satyrs, and similar profanities which surrounded the chamber.

The house was no sooner advertised, than it was immediately taken by an officer then quartered in Dublin. Being a man of taste, Colonel Conyers would not allow the house to be remodelled in any way. Mrs. Conyers, too, was a woman who liked novelty, and she triumphantly pictured to herself what a delightful sensation her antique-looking drawing-room would create when well lighted up and filled with a fashionable mob. A pretty, piquante little woman, she was enthusiastically charmed and enchanted with her Irish residence. One day, about the beginning of October, she moved into it, with her two infant children, and two servants whom she

had brought from England—a cook and a nurse. For the first night she had no other servants in the house.

Upon the first evening of Mrs. Conyers' arrival, her husband was obliged to spend the day and night from home. She amused herself by wandering about the old house, prying into musty cabinets and cupboards, looking with wondering and admiring eyes upon the rare old Venetian glass and egg-shell china, which seemed almost too fine and too delicate for use. About half-past six o'clock, as she sat in the drawing-room, the nurse entered, saying that it was necessary for her to go out to buy some things urgently required. The woman respectfully asked her mistress if she would go up to the nursery to the children should she hear them cry.

"Certainly, nurse. I suppose you will not be very long away?"

"I cannot say, madam. I do not know Dublin."

"Then I think cook had better go with you—she has been here before. I daresay no one will call this evening."

“Thank you, madam,” and the nurse left the room. Presently, Mrs. Conyers heard the hall-door closed, and the two women’s footsteps echoing down the steps.

A quarter of an hour—twenty minutes passed. The doors between the drawing-room and the nursery, two flights higher up, were left open, so that Mrs. Conyers could hear every sound. The evening was fast closing in, and she experienced a strange feeling of loneliness, and began to regret her foolish impulse in allowing both servants to go out. She laid down the book she had been reading, and presently one of the children gave a cry.

The mother started from the couch where she was reclining, and was about to go up to the nursery, when hurried footsteps on the stairs struck upon her ear.

“Oh! I need not go,” she said to herself; “I suppose cook has stayed at home, after all:” and, having by this time reached the door, she indeed saw, by the waning light, the figure of an elderly woman turning the

landing of the flight upstairs opposite to her. Mrs. Conyers returned to her sofa. But the child's crying did not cease; and as she listened, it increased from a whining cry to a wail of terror. In alarm she started up and ran to the nursery. The eldest boy, a child of three years old, was sitting up in bed, shrieking; but the cook was nowhere to be seen.

In vain Mrs. Conyers tried to pacify the child. "Freddy," she asked, "did not cook come up to you?"

But the child only sobbed the more convulsively; so much so, that the mother refrained from asking any further questions. Softly singing to him, he was soon asleep again, and she stole quietly from the room. It was almost dark, yet she distinctly saw, walking a few steps before her, the figure of the woman which she yet believed to be cook.

"Why, cook, I thought you had gone out with nurse."

The figure had just reached the bottom of the flight of stairs; it turned slowly round,

revealing the face of an old woman with a white cap-border closely crimped around her puckered-up, leering face. A gruesome, weird light seemed to surround her, so that Mrs. Conyers distinctly saw the shrivelled lips move, the bleared eyes gleam; and the skaky, skinny hand, which was raised and shaken menacingly at her. The figure then turned and ran swiftly down the stairs.

For a moment, Mrs. Conyers was frightened; but, girding up her courage, she blamed herself for giving way to nervousness—persuading herself that it must be some person engaged by the cook. She walked slowly down the stairs, her heart beating violently, and called out courageously—

“My good woman, who are you; and what is your business here?”

For answer, a chuckling laugh resounded throughout the echoing old house. The clatter of many feet was heard upon the stairs; still, the brave little woman hardly quailed. But what was she to do? She was too terrified to venture after the figure.

Just then, there was a knock at the hall-door, and, with a sense of relief, she hastened down to open it. The two women-servants entered.

"Cook," said Mrs. Conyers, "did you leave any one in the house during your absence?"

"No, madam."

"Well, you had better go and look in the kitchen, for some woman went down the stairs just now."

Lights were speedily procured, and every inch of the basement story was unavailingly searched. The doors were then secured, and as Mrs. Conyers saw the servants were rather frightened, she wisely refrained from entering into any particulars concerning either the manner of the figure, or the strange noises which she had heard.

The next day she related the circumstance to her husband, who laughed at her nervous fancies, and practically suggested that a close eye be kept on the area gate. The weeks flew by, and the affair seemed to be

almost forgotten ; until one evening, as Colonel and Mrs. Conyers sat alone in the dining-room, the sound of many footsteps was heard in the drawing-room overhead, and a plaintive air was played upon the old spinnet. They listened, amazed, for a minute, and at length Mrs. Conyers said—

“ Henry, I am sure it is that—that thing ! ”

“ You little goose ! ” he exclaimed, laughing.

“ Stay where you are, and I’ll go and see.”

He bounded up the stairs—there was a hurried shuffling of feet ; the music ceased, and he soon returned. The scene he had witnessed he could not relate to his nervous, delicate wife. Therefore, to avoid being questioned, he said, with an assumption of gaiety—

“ Mabel, congratulate me ! I have at last seen your mythical old woman ! ”

Mrs. Conyers shivered, and nestled into her husband’s sheltering arms, as she whispered, faintly : “ Yes, I know you have seen her, for I saw her go before you out of the room.”

They could not account for the phenomenon, and naturally were diffident about mentioning it to any one. Thus the time passed on until Christmas.

With the Christmas-time, there arrived a nephew of Colonel Conyers'. Clever, handsome Val Wycherley: a young doctor who had just taken out his diploma. He had passed a brilliant examination, and before again resuming work, had come to spend a few weeks in Dublin, for the purpose of resting his overtaxed brain. It was agreed that he should not be told anything about the mysterious old woman.

On Christmas Day a number of friends were expected to dine. There was also to be an evening party; therefore, in order to save trouble, Mrs. Conyers had had the dining-table arranged early in the afternoon, and then locked the door. She was very proud of her daintily-arranged table: she had tastefully disposed the quaint-coloured and gilt Venetian glass, and the rare old china belonging to the house. Groups of shepherds and

shepherdesses, holding cornucopiæ filled with glistening holly, interspersed with its own bright red berries and the snowy white ones of the mistletoe, were placed at intervals along the table.

About five in the afternoon, as Colonel Conyers and his nephew were sauntering home round the square, a sudden and heavy shower came on. They walked fast, but by the time they arrived at the hall-door they were thoroughly drenched. Colonel Conyers immediately went into his dressing-room on the first landing, inviting his nephew to follow ; but that free-and-easy young gentleman preferred taking off his wet boots in the hall.

“Here, Bridget!—Mary!—Whoever you are, take these boots, like a good girl,” said he, addressing a woman standing in the shade at the top of the kitchen stairs.

An aged woman, habited in an old-fashioned black gown, with a white handkerchief pinned across her bosom, approached him. He threw the boots to her, and, to his horror, they went

through her! and then the figure vanished! Val, being a doctor, his practical thought was, "By Jove! my head must be in a precious queer state! a bad look-out for me, and Christmas fare in prospective. I had better say nothing, however, or these good folk may think I am completely off my head."

He walked slowly up the stairs, and on the first landing again was the figure. It preceded him step by step, but Val did not feel frightened; as before, ascribing the vision to purely physical causes acting upon a brain which he felt was overtasked. Although a medical man, it did not occur to him to apply the unfailing test of pressing one eye so as to throw it out of the parallel focus with the other. If the object be the result of hallucination, it is seen still and simply; if actual vision, it is seen double. The figure entered the drawing-room. Val mechanically followed it; and there, what a scene met his eye!

On the polished oaken floor near the fireplace lay the body of a young and beautiful

foreign-looking woman, richly dressed. There were wounds about her neck half-concealed by her long raven-black hair. A tall, dark-complexioned man stood near, holding a long, thin, Venetian stiletto, whilst beside him stood the old woman, who laughed a fearful laugh, as she spurned the body with her foot!

As she laughed, the vision faded, and Val Wycherly left the drawing-room, uneasy for his brain. At the door he was met by Mrs. Conyers, who insisted upon his coming down to see her pretty dinner-table. Colonel Conyers was also one of the privileged, and the proud young housekeeper unlocked the dining-room door, when lo!—all the exquisite old china and glass lay in fragments upon the floor! The table-cloth was pulled away, and all the pretty decorations ruthlessly destroyed! In a recess near the fireplace stood a dark, foreign-looking man, and the old woman, both of whom laughed devilishly, and then vanished! The scene was witnessed by the three. Mrs. Conyers fainted in her husband's arms. A serious nervous illness followed,

and as soon as it was practicable she was removed from the house.

Val Wycherly recounted his experiences in the drawing-room, and Colonel Conyers admitted that he had witnessed the same scene. Of course they left the house, but refrained from making the reason public, beyond telling the proprietors; who, naturally, did not credit it. But tenant after tenant left, scared away by strange noises and appearances, and the house fell gradually into its present state of decay: not even a care-taker could be induced to remain in it.

The main facts of the preceding story are perfectly true, and were related to the writer by Mrs. Nugent's daughter, the present proprietress of the ill-fated house.

MISS HONOR'S PATIENTS.

CHAPTER I.

A FEW miles to the north-west of Dublin, reside a set of people as primitive as any to be met with in the wilds of Connemara. Any one who has not lived amongst them can hardly realise the extraordinary distinctness of the idiosyncrasies characterising the inhabitants of the different hamlets. These are indeed so strongly marked, that even the phrases used in one place are seldom heard in the next village. The hamlet of Duntobber is no exception to this rule. In constant intercourse with Ireland's chief city, working in the houses and upon the land of the surrounding gentry, yet the aborigines of Duntobber obstinately refuse to accept civilisation and to become as other people are. They

have their own peculiar old-world ways of doing things ; they hold their own traditions upon certain subjects ; and if any one of an innovating turn of mind tries to reason them out of their prejudices, they invariably quote the untimely fate, or the entire frustration of the hopes, of some weak-minded neighbour, who allowed himself or herself to be seduced into trying "these new-fangled ways."

From the foregoing remarks, it must not be inferred that the people in question are by any means stupid. Far from it. They each and all possess in a remarkable degree that species of shrewdness which seems peculiar to the Irish peasant. Their odd witty sayings and quaint remarks can hardly be excelled for point and originality. A chief peculiarity of theirs is that they commonly settle amongst themselves the affairs of their upper-class neighbours, and bitterly resent any deviation from the line of conduct they may think fit to point out.

The news of the probable resignation of the dispensary doctor was received with

marked disapprobation by the gossips of Duntobber. For thirty-five years had Doctor Boyce faithfully laboured amongst them. A jovial, kind-hearted little man, he understood their peculiarities, and humoured them. Every man, woman and child in the parish was on speaking terms with him. He knew all their affairs; alternately scolded or sympathised with them. But the hand of age was beginning to lie heavily upon him, and at length the old doctor was obliged to resign. The dispensary tickets for Duntobber district are issued by a Mr. Kirwan, the owner of the hamlet and the land surrounding it. At least, said gentleman is commonly supposed to dispense them; but finding the recitals of the various symptoms of the applicants rather more than he has the patience to listen to, he usually contents himself by signing the books of tickets, and giving them into the care of his daughter Honor. She is a merry, good-looking girl of about one-and-twenty, and an especial favourite of Doctor Boyce's. He has known Honor from her birth; and she,

knowing she is a privileged person, often wickedly tries his patience by giving verbatim, upon the tickets, the words of the patients.

It is a "dispensary morning" in early March, and Honor sits in the breakfast-room in Duntobber House, whilst the applicants for tickets are one by one ushered in.

"Well, Molly—how are you to-day?"

"Throth, only middlin', Miss Honor. I kem for another ticket, miss."

"Why, Molly, you don't want a second one. You had a ticket on Tuesday. What did the doctor say to you?"

"Faith, I dunno, miss. Shure he didn't know what was the matther wid me at all; so I jist want yeh t' write it down more perticklar this time."

"I cannot possibly do so, Molly," says Miss Honor, too well accustomed to such requests to feel even amused by them. "Did Doctor Boyce give you any physic?"

"Yis, honey—yis; but the sorra taste o' good it did me."

"You don't know. You might have been worse if you hadn't taken it."

"The nerra fear o' me, miss; shure, here it is." And from beneath her apron Molly produces a pint bottle of some whitish fluid. "I knewn it wouldn't do me no good, Miss Honor, so where was the use in dhrinkin' it?"

Miss Honor sits with a perfectly imperturbable countenance, and says severely—

"Well, really, Molly, you ought to have had more sense. Do you fancy you know better than the doctor?"

"There now, Miss Honor, jewil! Yer gettin' crass, an' all for nothin' at all—only a bottle av dirty physic! Ye'll give us another ticket, honey," she continues, insinuatingly, "an' yeh'll put in it that the docthor didn't know what was the matter wid me the last time, an' that me ailment is the same as Peggy Cluskey's, an' that I want a good rattlin' bottle av black-lookin' physic like hers? It was grand stuff, miss. Peggy went t' bed, an' tuk it; and in less nor no time

there was a dhrop o' sweat an the ind avivry hair an her head."

"Don't be ridiculous, Molly! Go and tell that to the doctor yourself. Go now; there are others waiting to be attended to."

"I'm goin', Miss Honor, darlint—I'm goin', agra! But shure yer goin' t' give me the laist taste o' writin' for the docthor?"

Knowing from experience that she may as well yield, Miss Honor writes a few lines in which she strictly adheres to Molly's statement. The latter goes on her way rejoicing, and the next applicant for relief is ushered in. She is a tall, untidy, elderly woman, with a swarthy skin, piercing blue-black eyes, and grizzled hair, almost concealed beneath a large white cap with deep muslin borders. It is the kind of cap invariably worn by the real Irish country-women; the only head-gear which bears the least resemblance to it being the high cap worn by the Norman peasantry. In justice to Irish women of this class, it must be admitted that the mutations of fashion seldom affect them. An Irish peasant

woman looks with awe and admiration upon the tasteful, fashionable dress of a lady, but it seldom enters her head that such attire would be suited to her; indeed, we could name one woman of the peasant class in Duntobber, who ran the risk of losing her reputation merely because she was the possessor of a green silk gown! When an Irish farmer gets on in the world, his wife does not ape the newest London or Paris fashions; her clothing may be of finer materials than heretofore, but they are the same time-honoured kind of materials, and always made in the same fashion.

But this is a digression from Bridget Morris, the wife of Con Morris, the bellows-maker. Bridget is a power in Duntobber; unlike the generality of women of her class in Ireland, she has no respect for her superiors; and the priest, the doctor, and even Miss Honor herself not unfrequently receive from her what she graphically calls "the linth an' breth av her tongue." Her audacity is proverbial, and her powers of rhetoric would fill a Billingsgate fish-wife.

with envy. Secretly, Miss Honor is rather afraid of Bridget, and in an abject and cowardly manner writes down whatever symptoms the virago may think fit to detail. Other patients may be managed; Bridget Morris is unmanageable.

"It's not for meself I want the ticket, Miss Honor," she says, in reply to that young lady's interrogations; "it's for Con, the omadhawn!"

"I'm sorry to hear that," returns Miss Honor, with whom simple, good-natured, credulous Con is a favourite.

"Keep yer pity for them that wants it," retorts the virago irascibly; "Con catched cowl'd be his own gallivantin'! Will yeh write the ticket, Miss Honor?"

"Certainly, Bridget; what am I to say?" asks Miss Honor in a cowardly tone; "how old is Con?"

"Fifty, or thereabouts," responds Bridget in an offhand manner.

"Fifty," repeats Miss Honor as she writes.

"Or thereabouts," amends Bridget empha-

tically, and adding warningly, "Mind, Miss Honor, Tom Blake can read writin', an' av yeh don't put down exact what yer towld, I'll tell the docthor an yeh—so put down the 'thereabouts,' for Con might be sixty for all I know!"

With a mirthful twinkle in her eye, Miss Honor obeys.

"Now read it, miss," demands Bridget.

"Age—fifty, or thereabouts; might be sixty for all his wife knows," gravely reads Miss Honor.

"Och! shure, that's splindid! the docthor can't make no mistake now."

"But what is the matter with Con, Bridget?"

"I'm comin' t' that, Miss Honor, I'm comin' t' that. First an' foremost he has a quareness in his head, an' a rumblin' an' rowlin' in his inside; an' his brathin's short, miss, for all the wurruld like an ould bellis athout a snout. Put that all down, miss, for Con said himself that's exact how he felt, an' sure he ought t' know, miss, bein' a bellis-maker."

Afraid to trust herself to make an answer, Miss Honor writes in silence; as she pauses, Bridget asks—

“Is that all down, miss?”

“Yes; don’t you think it is enough to say?”

“Arrah, Miss Honor, that’s not the half av it! Say his skin’s as hot as a biled piatee.”

“Skin burning,” writes Miss Honor.

“Is that done, miss?”

“Yes—skin burning.”

“Put like a hot piatee!” says Bridget peremptorily; “shure how’s the docthor t’ know av yeh don’t tell him?”

“There’s no more room on the ticket, Bridget.”

“Thim that med thim ought t’ make thim bigger thin!” retorts Bridget, adding, “Yeh’ll come up an’ see Con, Miss Honor?”

“Certainly, after you come and tell me if the doctor says I may.”

“He may tell us t’ put an a blisther, or a poultice, an’ av coorse yeh’ll come an’ do it, Miss Honor?”

“To be sure,” replies the young lady unconcernedly. Miss Honor is looked upon as being the doctor’s assistant and the common property of the hamlet.

CHAPTER II.

Two hours have passed away. Miss Honor looks towards the gate, and seeing Bridget advancing in an excited manner, she naturally concludes Con must be worse. On benevolent thoughts intent, the young lady advances towards her, and is unfeignedly astonished to hear Bridget exclaim—

“Throth an’ faith, Miss Honor, it’s Docthor Boyce ought t’ be ashamed av himself !”

“Why?—what’s the matter now?” asks Miss Honor, as she quietly divests herself of her gardening gloves.

“Matther enough!” cries the virago. “Why, afther Docthor Boyce makin’ his livin’ out av us for thirty odd years, he pays us the disrispect av puttin’ a young chap into the dispinsary.”

“What!” exclaims Miss Honor in dismay, as she thinks of some half-dozen verbatim tickets which she has written that morning;

"surely the new doctor has not come. We heard nothing about it from Doctor Boyce, and he was here the other day. We knew there was a new doctor to be appointed soon, but did not know he had come yet."

"'Deed an' he's there, Miss Honor—a sawney-lookin' chap, not a bit bigger nor me own Mick."

"Doctor Boyce is not very big either," remarks Miss Honor apologetically.

"But av he's little, he's ould, an' he has the larnin'," is the sententious reply.

"Oh! well, you mustn't take a dislike to the new doctor because he's not very tall. You know I'm not very big myself, Bridget."

"No, indeed, miss," says Bridget, with a keen glance at the young lady; "an' whin ye wor a weeshy, dawney little thing, I thought yeh'd be a fine girl, but throth, Miss Honor, yeh grew up mighty brief afther all."

"Yes, indeed," says Miss Honor, too well accustomed to these personal remarks to take umbrage at them. "Is the doctor—the new doctor, I mean—coming to see Con?"

"Yis, he's comin'," replies Bridget, with an aggrieved air, "but I'm thinkin' the nerra much use he'll be."

After-events prove that Doctor Walker is inclined to consider himself an exquisite, and to look with a certain amount of disgust upon his decidedly eccentric patients: a state of affairs they are not by any means slow to discover. Naturally, he wants to mould them to his way of thinking and managing matters; whilst, on the other hand, they have not the slightest intention of being shunted out of their customary groove.

Miss Honor, too, is beginning to act strangely; she actually refuses to write the verbatim dispensary tickets, the result being that they all look askance at her, and decide she has become a traitor, has gone over to the enemy, and panders to the depraved taste and "new-fangled ways" of the new doctor.

"Well, Miss Honor, the short an' the long av it is that we don't think the new docthor'll shoot us by no manner o' manes. We do be all talkin' a power about it; an' yeh see,

Miss Honor, he doesn't undherstand our ailments."

"That's nonsense, Con."

"Not a bit av it, Miss Honor. Shure, he doesn't give us no medicine at all hardly."

"Well, perhaps that is Doctor Walker's way of curing people. Perhaps he does not approve of much medicine."

"It won't do, Miss Honor—it won't do," says Con, shaking his head gravely; "but listen t' me, agra. The docthor doesn't undherstand our ailments, an' you do, miss. An' shure, miss, Bridget an' a lot of the wimmin wint up t' the dispinsary this mornin', an' towld the docthor that the only thing for him t' do is for you an' him t' put up yer horses t'gether."

Miss Honor looks aghast. She knows that to put up their horses together is the vernacular for being married. Incapable of giving a coherent answer, she stares wrathfully at Con, who continues deliberately—

"They towld him, Miss Honor, that it 'ud be a good thing for him, for you knewn a

power about our ailments, an' cud put him in an thim : an' that we'd spake t' yeh, miss, an' that av yeh wor agreeable, we'd be willin' t' give him another thrial."

No remark from Miss Honor.

"An', 'pon me conscience," continues Con. charitably and insinuatingly, "he's not bad t' look at, an' he has a dacent little place an' a nice bit o' land; av coorse, the masther'll give yeh a bit o' money, Miss Honor, so that, faith, we think yeh cud be very comfortable."

Not daring to trust herself to make any reply, Miss Honor decamps precipitately, and walks quickly in the direction of home. Her cheeks are flaming with indignation, the more so because she knows that remonstrance of any kind would be useless. The inhabitants of Duntobber simply could not be made to understand what grounds she could possibly have for resenting their interest in her settlement in life. At this stage of her reflections a turn in the road brings her face to face with Doctor Boyce.

"Well, my pet," says the old man in his customary cheery voice; "and where are you coming from?"

"I have just been to see Con Morris," is the reply, whilst the colour mounts to her forehead. There is a mischievous twinkle in the old man's eye as he says interrogatively—

"Then I presume you have heard of the deputation to the dispensary. Poor Walker," continues the old man, with a chuckle of intense enjoyment, "is nearly at his wits' end amongst all the women."

"It's horrible!" exclaims Miss Honor with quivering lips. "Of course Doctor Walker doesn't understand what an extraordinary set of people they are in Duntobber. What will he think of me?"

"Make your mind perfectly easy, my child," says the old man, looking very knowing. "Time will tell what his opinion is. Judging by my own feelings, I'd rather marry a female gorilla than incur the wrath of Bridget Morris."

We have the information from the most

authentic source, that two months ago Doctor Walker formally and legally took Miss Honor as a partner, much to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of Duntobber, who freely expressed their opinion to him, that—

“He wasn’t half good enough for Miss Honor; but she was borned an’ rared among thim, an’ knewn their ways an’ their ailments; an’ it ’ud go hard on her but she’d make a man av him yit.”

MAUREEN.

KILNAMUCK for ivir an' the sky over it ! It's meself that's glad t' be standin' on me own sweet sod wanst more ; an' shure when I tell yeh all th' ins an' outs av the matther yeh won't blame me for that same. I'm a thravelled man, but begorra I ped dear for the thravellin', for yeh see this is how I happened t' go over t' that murtherin' Lundin. Misther Jack, there beyant at Castle Ffrinch, he's a fine, free-handed gintleman, so he is—the sorra more so in Ireland—an' he wanted two bull pups brought over to Misther Bob O'Connell that was larnin' t' be a lawyer there beyant in Lundin. So sez he t' me wan day—

“Larry Lanighan,” sez he, “only it's the Kilnamuck huntin' saison, I go over t' Lundin wid thim pups meself. I'm perticklar about

thim," sez he, "an' don't like t' sind thim alone, so I'm thinkin' av sindin' you along wid thim."

"Thank yeh kindly for the job, Misther Jack," sez I, as plazed as anything, "an' whin must I go, sur?"

"On Monda'," sez he.

Well, sure enough, on Monda' I wint t' Dublin be the thrain wid the pups, and thin wint across th' say until I landed in Lundin. Tare an'-ages, but it's a grand place intirely! There's few things we haven't here in Ireland, but begorra, we haven't a place like Lundin at all—it bates ivirythin' ivir I seen! Whin I got out o' the ship wid me bundle an' the two pups, I was walkin' along, quite pedestrian-like, lookin' for a jaunтин' car t' hire t' bring me t' Misther Bob O'Connell's, whin a dacint-lookin' man sez t' me—

"Thim's two fine dogs," sez he.

"Yeh may well say that," sez I, "for they're Misther Jack Ffrinch's own breed, av Kilnamuck, in the County Tipperary; an' the sorra purer breed ye'd meet wid in the three kingdoms!"

"Me dear frind," sez he, quite good-timpered-like, shakin' me hand, "I'm very glad t' see yeh, an' t' welcome yeh to the methropolis av the wurruld! Shure I know Misther Jack Ffrinch, an' anywan from him must be welcome to me."

"It 'ud ill become me t' say agin yeh," sez I, feelin' six fut high at meetin' a frind. "Maybe yeh know Misther Bob O'Connell, av Journeaux Court, at Temple Bar, that I'm bringin' the pups to."

"Know him!" sez he, "ov course I know him. Bob an' me is grate frinds. Come along an' I'll bring yeh to him. He only lives round the corner here."

Throth, it was a load off me mind t' hear him say that, for Misther Jack sed it was a long way from the ship t' Misther Bob's, an' that I'd have t' dhrive there. But shure, I thought, maybe Misther Jack didn't know the right way, an' at last we kem to a street where clothes was all hangin' outside the doors, an' sez he—

"I know me frind Bob 's ingaged now,"

sez he ; "jist step in here an' I'll bring him to yeh."

Wid that he brought me into a soart av a little shop where there was white stone tables an' aitin' an' dhrinkin'an' wint off for Mистер Bob. After a while he kem back be himself, an' sez he t' me—

"I find Mистер Bob left town, an' won't be home till t' morra evenin'; an' the quarest part av it is that he left a message for me t' take care av you an' the pups until he'd come back."

"It's like Mистер Bob t' do the dacint thing," sez I. "The O'Connells was always dacint—stock, lock, an' barril."

"Right yeh are," said he. "I'm thinkin' I'd like t' show yeh some life while yeh here. Wouldn't yeh like t' come to the thayater?"

"That's a soart av a show, isn't it?" sez I t' him.

"Yes," sez he, "an' if ye'll jist stay here for a minnit I'll lave th' dogs at Mистер Bob's lodgin's while yeh ait somethin'. Ye'll not have time av yeh come wid me."

Nothin' cud be fairer nor that, an' I was mortal hungry ; so Misther Bob's frind tuk the dogs, an' got me lashins av meat an' bread an' ale.

Well, to make a long story short, the two av us wint t' the show. An', begorra, a show it was, an' no mistake, for the people all med shows av themselves ! There was a lot o' men an' wimmin wid nothin' but flowers round thim for clothes ; and the sorra bit they seemed t' mind it, but stud there quite continted.

"Arrah, musha," sez I, "thim wimmin hasn't a bit o' dacency in thim. The poorest girsha in Kilnamuck 'ud rather go about like a bundle o' rags—as many a wan does ; God help thim !—nor go about wid nothin' but flowers an like that !"

"Thim's 'posey plasticks,'" sez Mr. Bob's frind, laughin' fit t' split.

"I suppose they're called 'posey' bekase they have flowers an' laves an' thim," sez I. "Anyhow, I'm glad Nancy isn't wid me ; the throth, the dacint woman 'ud be ashamed t' look me in the face afther seein' thim ?"

“Who’s Nancy?” sez a frind av Misther Bob’s frind.

“The woman that owns me, beyant in Kilnamuck, convayniant to Humphy Dempsey’s boreen,” sez I.

All this time I was lookin’ very hard at wan av the “Poseys.” She was a purty crathur, wid bright blue eyes, an’ the loveliest head o’ black hair iver seen out av a picthur. Somehow or other her face wasn’t strange t’ me. I kep’ lookin’ and lookin’, an’ jist thin Misther Bob’s frind nudged me elbow, an’, sez he—

“That’s a counthrywoman av yours right in the front. She’s representin’ ‘Diana’; she’s Miss Kathleen Blake, but here we call her ‘The Wild Irish Girl.’”

Whilst he was spakin’ I was lookin’ at her, and all av a suddint a big lump riz in me inside—throth, not a lie I’m tellin’ when I say my heart leped into me throat. The “Poseys” an’ the lights an’ the people was all dancin’ round about me, an’ I roared out—

“Arrah, don’t you be belyin’ her! She’s no more Miss Kathleen Blake nor you are.

She's Maureen Maginnis—me own aunt's daughter, that we thought wint t' Americay last spring. Throth! it's well she gev up her name, for it's an honest wan, an' 'ud be ashamed of her, the ondacint crathur! Maureen Maginnis, its Larry Lanighan sez so!"

Widdyeelish! Shure, Maureen, that was standin' there jist like a statty, gev wan big schreech, and fell all av a hape an the flure. There was sich a rumpus as yeh nivir seen or heerd, an' they hustled me out av the place, and begad, a polisman tuk me off, an' giv me free lodgin's for the night. Shure the worst of it all was Misther Bob's frind got away in the scuffle, and the next mornin' I was brought up in the court for creatin' a disturbance.

"He was in the company av a well-known set av sharpers and thieves, yeh wusship," sez the polisman t' the magisthrate.

"Throth, yeh nivir tould a bigger lie!" says I. "I was wid a dacint man, yer riverence!—wid a frind av Misther Bob O'Connell's, an' he was only doin' Misther

Bob's biddin' in takin' care av me while he was away!"

"Me poor man!" sez the magistrate—a mighty nice man intirely, barrin' that he lost his crop av hair all out—"from what I'm tould, I'm afeard yeh've been swindled. Tell me yer story."

Shure, thin, I ups an' tould him everythin'—all about the pups an' Maureen Maginnis—an' throth, as an honest Irisher, I was ashamed t' own she was me own blood, but I had t' do it—and I was jist sayin' that Misther Bob was larnin' t' be a lawyer, when the ould gintleman sez—

"Yeh fell into bad hands," sez he. "Misther O'Connell is a frind av mine. He dined wid me last night. I'll send for him, so stan' aside till he comes."

An' shure enough, Misther Bob kem, an' roared laughin', an' bedad, shure we hunted an' hunted antil we got the bull-pups. Av coorse I told him all about Maureen Maginnis, an', sez I—

"Throth, Misther Bob, I'm ashamed t'

spake av her even to a young gintleman like you, but she can't be doin' right there. D'ye think she'd come home wid me t'her ould mother, an' shure I'd nivir tell anywan I seen her makin' a disgrace av herself."

"No," says Misther Bob, makin' answer quite short like. "Let her stay where she is, if she wint home—an' there's no chance that she would—she'd thry t' make half the girls in Kilnamuck as bad as herself."

"Well, mebbe yer right, Misther Bob," says I, "but it hardly feels right t' lave the crathur, bad as she is, in the state I saw her. D'ye know, sir, av she has clothes dacint enough t' go out in?"

"What!" sez Misther Bob, roarin' wid the laughin'. "Is that all yeh know! Why she dhresses grander nor any lady in Lundin!"

Some wan kem in t' spake t' Misther Bob, so I cudn't git any more discoorse av him. His vally was Tom Ryan—son av ould Pat Ryan's, av Ballykilback—an' the next day bein' the day av a boat-race, Misther Bob told Tom t' bring me to it.

Och ! there's no use in talkin', but it was the grandest thing ivir I seen. There was all soarts av boats, an' coaches an' carriages av all kinds, barrin' jauntin' cars. Me head was fairly turned wid the grandeur. We had the hoighth av grand aiting an' dhrinkin', an' wor just thinkin' av comin' home, whin a beautiful carriage dhrove past very slow ; an' shure as I'm a tellin' this, there was Maureen Maginnis sittin' in it beside a gintleman !

She looked splindid all out wid her silks and satins, an' her grand bracelets an' goold all about her. An' she was laughin' an' smilin' up at the gintlemin jist as though she was the first lady in the land.

"Av coorse yeh know who that is?" sez Tom, whin Maureen wint past.

"Yes," sez I ; "it's Maureen Maginnis."

"That's her grate frind, Lord Turnip-tops," sez Tom.

"Bedad, it's little ivir Maureen thought she'd be sittin' beside a lord," sez I. "D' ye ivir spake to her, Tom ?"

"No," sez Tom, quite sorraful, "I don't mind tellin' yeh, Larry, that I was mortal fond av Maureen, the *colleen cusha dhas* (the 'girl with the pretty feet'), as we used t' call her, an' wanted her t' marry me, an' thin I'd av sted at home, instid av sellin' the few acres me uncle left me. It wasn't much, I know; but she was that purty—she was the breakin's av me heart—an' not a lie I'm tellin' whin I say I'd ha' lived on the clippin's o' tin wid her. But Maureen's head got turned be some gintlemin that war shootin' at Kilnamuck, and she jist purtinded t' go t' Amerikay, an' kem over here."

"Is that thrue?" sez I, for faix, I was bothered entirely.

"As thrue as the Sivin Sacraments!" sez he. "Shure whin wan av the gintlemin tould me she was in Lundin, I axed Misther Bob to make me his vally—yeh see, I thought she might want a frind. I got a chance av spakin' to her wan day, but she laughed at me! Larry, she bruk me heart!"

"The sorry much loss she is," sez I, sorry

for the poor boy, for he spoke wid a keen in his voice.

"She was a loss to me," sez he, quite quiet. "I'd do anythin' to make her give up her wrong ways."

Aw! Yeh nivir seen any boy so fond av a girsha as he was o' Maureen! There was wan night we wint t' the thayater where she was, an' some chaps began speakin' av her. All av a suddint Tom takes a grip o' me by the arm an' dhrags me out, and nivir stopped until we war in the open sthreet, an' thin sez he—

"Holy Nelly," sez he, "isn't it enough t' set a boy mad t' hear the woman he loves spoke light about?" an' as shure as I a tellin' this, he cried salt tears the whole way back to Misther Bob's.

Well, me jewel! shure, after seein' all the sights in Lundin, I kem home to Kilnamuck, and the sorra word I ivir said about Maureen Maginnis, bekase Tom axed me not t' say it. But last Candlemas I got a letther from him, an' as I was afeard it was something about

Maureen, an' not bein' able t' read writin', I tuk it up t' Father Maher. It was something about Maureen, shure enough. She died in 'ospital, an' the nuns sint for Tom t' see her, for she axed for him. She was very sorry aforeshe wint—God rest her sowl—an' poor Tom was in a desp'rate way. Thin Father Maher, what does he do, d'ye think, but down he sits in his own parlour, an' me standin' by, an' he writes the beautifulest letther at all t' Tom! An' now what d'ye think he sed? Why no less nor than the Blessed Lord had a frind who was no betther nor she ought t' be, and whin she sed she was sorry an' promised not t' sin any more, why He talked t' her fair an' aisy afore all the wurruld, an' wasn't a bit ashamed av it aither. An' Father Maher tould Tom not t' think too hard av Maureen, for that it was more pity she wanted for bein' such a poor wake crathur an' forgettin' her duty. An' he sed she was safe in God's hands, an' that He wouldn't be too hard on her, for God looks on this an' that, an' can see inside av wan, as a human bein' can't.

Now shure that was a beautiful letther, an' it gev poor Tom all the comfort in the wurruld. An' sence thin, me an' Nancy does offen be talkin' about it, that av people 'ud be kind, they might offen get the soft side av a crathur that iviry wan sez is hardened, for there's nothin' like kindness, even to a baste. Father Maher sez that schreech poor Maureen giv wid the fright, showed she had some spark av dacency in her. That's just it; there's good in thim even that seems the very worst; an' his rivirence sez we all ought t' be as anxious t' find out the best side av people as well as the very worst; for there's many's the wan goes sthraight t' the bad bekase they nivir gits the kind word at home. Throth, I'm afeared it's thrue—God help thim!

“Right yeh are!” sez Nancy. “He's shure t' help thim av th' only ax Him!” An' take me word for it, the ould woman's right! she always has a good raison for what she sez!

“TILL THE SEA GIVES UP ITS DEAD.”

CHAPTER I.

NATURE wears her freshest, fairest dress. The sunlight is dancing upon the waters of the blue Atlantic, which curl, and eddy, and dance amongst the thousand islets of Clew Bay. The grey crest of Croagh Patrick is tinted with a golden glory, and the mouldering ruins of Murrisk Abbey, which lies at the foot of the mountain, are flushed with the rose-tints of sunset. The scene is one of rugged splendour; sea, sky, and mountain combining to form one glorious whole.

Just beside a stile commanding a view of the bay and the mountain a man sits sketching—a man of about eight-and-twenty, with a fair, slightly-bronzed Saxon face, a heavy

tawny moustache, and a short, crisp, pointed beard. He takes off his wide-brimmed straw hat, to get a fuller view of the mountain peak, and as he does so he reveals a wide white brow, beneath which flash a pair of dark grey eyes, of the kind which change with every motion of the possessor. His curling hair is worn in rather long, artistic fashion, for Gerald Mordan is an artist.

He is at present on a sketching tour along the rugged coast-line of the Western Highlands of Ireland, and for some days past has been revelling in the beauties of earth and sea and sky to be found in the neighbourhood of Croagh Patrick.

His quarters in the little village of Innismore have not been quite to his wishes ; but he has roughed it many a day before, when tramping with his knapsack on his back through Italy and Brittany ; so that if Paddy Roche's cabin be wanting in necessities, Gerald Mordan tries to console himself by contemplating the bounteous feast of scenery which Nature has spread around.

Raising his eyes from the sketch which he has been industriously working away at for some minutes, the artist sees his host approaching, a primitive-looking fishing basket on his back, and a home-made rod in his hand. He is a tall, loose-limbed Irish peasant of about forty-five, attired in a long grey freize coat—tucked up behind—and a hat garnished with flies and fish-hooks.

“Good evening, Paddy! Well, what luck had you to-day?”

“Th’ sorra much, sur. I wint up t’ the little Black Lake, at th’ far side av th’ mountain, thinkin’ I’d light on a few bass, but th’ sorra wan but half-a-dozen cud I catch. It’s bass that’s th’ ’cute fish, all out.”

“Is bass considered such a rarity here that you take such trouble about it?”

“Some thinks a power av thim, sur. For meself, I’d sooner have a salmon throut; but it’s for Miss Eily that I was thryin’ for th’ bass t’day.”

“Who is Miss Eily?”

“Miss Eily Frinch, sur. She lives wid her

mother there beyant in th' grey stone house jist before yeh come t' Innismore Chapel. It's they that's the good ladies ; an' shure it's poor Mrs. Frinch that had her own thrubble, God help her ! ”

“ Indeed ! ” Gerald Mordan feels interested at hearing of the neighbourhood of a pretty girl. “ May I ask what was the trouble which befell Mrs. French ? ”

“ Och ! bedad yeh may, sur ! Shure iviry wan in th' parish knows it. ” And Paddy, delighted to find so willing a listener, swings his basket of fish off his back, and places it on the top of the stile preparatory to commencing his story. “ Shure, I rimimbir Mrs. Frinch, meself, sur, whin she was only a bit av a girl ; an' thin she married Captain Dick Frinch—as fine a gintleman as yeh'd meet wid in a day's walk, an' she wint away wid him t' Ingia. Ay, indeed, sur, acrass th' says she wint, an' wan day a letther came t' say that she had two childhre—twins, sur, an' both girls. Well, in about two or three years news came that th' war all comin' home. But,

wirra! wirra! shure a storm came on, an' th' captin an' wan av the childhre was dhrowned an' th' poor heartbroken lady came home here wid the other little girl, an' lived wid her father in the grey house beyant antil th' ould gintleman died an' left it t'her."

"What a sad story! And does the lady live there yet?"

"Yis, sur. Mrs. Frinch an' Miss Eily lives there. Miss Eily grown up th' purtiest colleen in th' county. She has a head av hair as black as a crow, an' she's that light on her feet that she wouldn't crush th' heather on th' mountains; an' she's that purty that the very daisies does turn to look up at her! God be good t' uz! What's that?" he ejaculates, as a voice behind him says—

"Good evening, Paddy. Will you let us cross the stile?"

"Aw! if it's not th' misthress herself an' Miss Eily!" he exclaims delightedly.

And Gerald Mordan, rising to remove his easel out of the pathway, turns and sees two ladies.

The elder is a pleasant-faced, grave-looking woman with iron-grey hair—a woman with a saddened, chastened expression of countenance, as though she had suffered much during her span of life.

Gerald Mordan had seen the girls of Greece, the rich-hued daughters of Italy, and the dark-eyed women of Spain, but never did his eye rest upon a lovelier daughter of Eve than Eily French.

She appears to be about eighteen, with her rich blue-black hair falling in heavy curls to her waist. She has the straight, well-defined eyebrows and the deep passionate blue-grey eyes of her native land, whilst the full fresh lips, parted in a half smile as she looks at Paddy Roche, disclose a set of white even teeth.

“Shure I’ll git out av th’ way wid all th’ pleasure in life,” says Paddy, his ruddy face beaming. “I was jist tellin’ this gintleman, Miss Eily, that I wint all th’ way up t’ th’ Black Lake t’ git th’ bass for yeh, miss. Let me help yeh acrass, ma’am,” he continues,

with rude politeness, as Mrs. French attempts to cross the roughly piled-up stones which do duty for a stile.

But before he has time to lay down the basket and advance to her, Mrs. French stands upon the top of the stile ; in her haste to get down she dislodges a loose stone, and the whole pile tumbles. She herself will fall, does not Gerald Mordan catch her in his arms.

“Mother ! Mother dear ! Are you hurt ?” cries the girl, springing across the gap with the lightness of a mountain doe.

“I have hurt my foot, dear,” is the reply, whilst a deathlike pallor overspreads her face as she attempts to stand upright.

“You had better sit down,” suggests Gerald Mordan, as he draws over his camp-stool. “Will you let me look at your foot ? I know something of surgery.”

“Thank you,” says Mrs. French, as the young man kneels down and examines the injured member.

“What is the matter ?” exclaims the girl,

as she sees her mother wince beneath Gerald Mordan's touch. "Does it pain you so very much, mother?"

"Yes, dear."

"Is there anything very bad the matter?" she enquires; this time addressing Gerald Mordan.

"Nothing worse than a serious sprain," he replies gravely; "but that is bad enough."

"Oh! mother," cries the girl impulsively, her eyes filling with tears, "how are we ever to get you home?"

"Do you live far from this?" Gerald inquires.

"Not very far," says Mrs. French; "perhaps I had better try and get home at once."

"I think so; and if you will allow me I will take you home. You must lean on me one side, and upon this young lady."

"You are very kind. I ought to introduce myself. I am Mrs. French, of Innismore Lodge, and this is my daughter."

"And I," says Gerald Mordan, raising his

hat and bowing, “am a painter, and my name is Gerald Mordan.”

Paddy Roche takes charge of the painter’s easel and colours, and Gerald Mordan and Eily, with no little difficulty, succeed in slowly getting Mrs. French home. Bandages and splints are soon in readiness, and Gerald Mordan binds up the sprained ankle in such a professional manner that Mrs. French asks—

“Mr. Mordan, how does it happen that you know so much about surgery?”

“I was out during the Franco-Prussian war,” he replies, “as artist for a leading London paper. In an emergency I often assisted the surgeons, and thus learned some elementary surgery.”

Gerald Mordan accepts Mrs. French’s invitation to stay and take tea, the bright eyes of Eily being no inconsiderable attraction to induce him to do so. It is a pleasant, flower-garnished little sitting-room, that wherein they sit, with the casement opening on to the pretty lawn, with Croagh Patrick to the left, and the roar of the Atlantic in the distance.

He furtively watches the lovely girl as her deft, slender fingers move amidst the tea-cups and saucers, and he sees that the soft hand, embrowned by the sun, might serve for a sculptor's model.

The evening passes pleasantly for the painter. Eily seems so anxious about her mother, and so engrossed concerning her, that she pays her guest but little attention. He, however, consoles himself by looking at her bright young beauty, and mentally decides that if he can manage it this will be not his last visit to Innismore Lodge.

"I hope you will entrust your ankle to me, Mrs. French," he says, as he rises to take his leave.

"You are very kind," she replies, with a faint smile; "but what will Dr. Scott say, Eily?" and she glances questioningly at her lovely daughter.

"Why, mother, he can only say what you have said, and that is, that Mr. Mordan is very kind."

Gerald Mordan's spirits rise, for it seems

to him as though the girl wishes him to come again.

"At all events, you will allow me to call to-morrow morning and inquire how you are?"

"I shall be very happy to see you," says Mrs. French. "You say you are a stranger in the neighbourhood, so perhaps we may be able to be of some use to you, in return for your kindness to me this evening."

"Pray do not mention it," he replies hastily. "For your sake I am sorry for your accident. For my own, I can scarcely regret anything that has procured for me the pleasure of your acquaintance."

The stars of the summer night are palely twinkling as Gerald Mordan stands upon the gravelled sweep before the door of Innismore Lodge; the trees stand out mistily against the grey hue of the sky. There is no sound, save the occasional shriek of a curlew, and the distant dull boom of the restless, ceaseless sea. Beside him stands Eily French, who says:—

"There is a shorter way to Paddy Roche's

than the one by which you came—along the path which winds by the brow of the hill over there ;” and she waves her hand comprehensively.

“I think I had better keep to the beaten path,” he replies, laughing. “Your mountain paths are treacherous, and I might find myself walking off into ‘the deep blue sea’ before I could pull myself up.”

“Oh, I assure you this is quite safe. Come along with me and I’ll show it to you. It is only at the end of the paddock.”

What man would not have accepted such an invitation? Certainly not Gerald Mordan. Bareheaded—Eily French accompanies him down the little lawn and through the paddock, until they at length stand upon the cliff path, the Atlantic plashing and booming some hundreds of feet below.

“Now,” she says, pointing straight before her, “you go along there until you come to a stile leading to the road, and you can easily find your way from that.”

He looks at her as she stands there, her

oval face framed in her masses of black tresses, which fall on her white dress. He can almost fancy she looks like some spirit of the mountains, and he tells her so.

Eily laughs. In the faint light of the summer's night he cannot see that her colour deepens.

“Good-bye!” she says, waving her hand, and running lightly down the hill. “Good-bye, and don't lose your way.”

Gerald Mordan stands there and watches the slight white-robed figure until it is out of sight, and then turns and walks to Paddy Roche's cabin, feeling that he has entered upon a new era of existence.

* * * * *

It is some weeks since summer's golden days have reached their burning prime, yet Gerald Mordan still lingers in Innismore. His acquaintance with the dwellers at Innismore Lodge has ripened into friendship, and Gerald would fain think that upon Eily's part a warmer feeling for him than friendship

filled her breast, for the painter has come to love the lovely girl—to love her truly, purely, passionately—as he has never loved woman before; and as she sits now upon a ledge of rock, a scarlet handkerchief wound around her raven tresses, he feels his heart yearn towards her, and longs to tell her of his love.

He is painting her as a Connaught fisher-maiden; she wears a short blue cotton dress, a little plaid shawl, and the scarlet kerchief on her head. Very lovely she looks, for a keen observer could not but note the softer expression of her full passionate grey eye and the heightened bloom upon her fair cheek.

“There! I think I’ve worked enough at it for to-day,” says the painter, rising and laying down his palette and brushes, and coming over to where she sits; “and you must be tired,” he continues, seating himself beside her, “to be obliged to remain so long in one position.”

“No, I am not tired”—Eily does not look at him as she speaks; her gaze is over the sea—“and I know you are anxious to have a

picture as far advanced as possible before you leave Innismore.”

“Before I leave Innismore!” he repeats, musingly, as he, too, gazes over the sea.

Eily makes no reply.

“It is a lovely place,” Gerald continues, “and I have been very happy here.”

“I hope your pictures will be successful,” she says, irrelevantly; but feeling she must not keep silent any longer—“you will let us know; will you not?”

“If you wish.” He looks at her narrowly; there is a deeper flush on her fair cheek, and Gerald fancies he sees her bravely struggling with a pair of dewy quivering lips.

“Eily!”

He takes her hand as he speaks. She turns her lovely glowing face towards him, and ere the sun dips behind the Western wave, Eily confesses that Gerald Mordan is the one love of her life.

CHAPTER II.

GERALD MORDAN does not leave Innismore as soon as he had contemplated doing so. Naturally, he wished to stay where his heart was; and, had he had his wish, would at once have married his beautiful betrothed, and have taken her back to London with him. But Mrs. French could not so easily part with her only child, and the enthusiastic lover had to be content with knowing that when the spring-time came again he might come and claim his bride.

A handsome and typical pair they look as they wander hand in hand over the shingle down by the rock-bound coast. She, with her raven curls and dazzlingly fair complexion, contrasting well with his fair Saxon looks and leonine locks. They are rather silent—their hearts are too full for words: for it is the afternoon of the day before Gerald Mordan leaves Innismore, and as hand meets hand,

heart meets heart, and they look into each other's eyes with the passionate yearning that comes in its fulness and its freshness but once in a lifetime.

"My darling," he says, tenderly, as they seat themselves on a wave-washed boulder, the grey rocks towering behind, and the Atlantic stretching before them; "you cannot think how miserable I am to have to leave you."

"Yes, Gerald," replies the girl with quivering lips, "I know well what you feel. But I would not have you stay any longer for your own sake. You know how proud I am of you, Gerald," she continues, raising her lustrous, love-laden eyes to his face, "and I want you to work and to make your name famous, so that your country may think as much of you as I do!"

"That is scarcely possible, little one," he says, putting his arm around her tenderly; "I don't think any one in the world ever thought as much of me as you do since my mother died. And, my darling! go on

believing in me; you don't know what an impetus it is to a man to work if he feels sure there is one woman in the world whom he loves and respects, and who thoroughly loves and believes in him!"

"Of course I love you and believe in you, Gerald," she replies, simply; "you are all the world to me, and if I were to lose you I should die."

"You shall not lose me, dear. Nothing but death could separate us."

"I don't think death could separate us," she says, musingly, whilst her slender fingers caress his strong ones. "I almost fancy that if I were to die my spirit would be sure to come back to you."

"Come, come, little woman! You must not get such fancies into this busy, dreamy little brain of yours. You are quite witch-like enough at present to suit my taste, and your face is always haunting me."

"Flatterer! You have blarney enough for an Irishman," she answers, with a little smile.

"Well,"—and an expression of huge content and delight overspreads his countenance as he looks down at the girl's glowing flower-like face—"I shall soon be partly an Irishman. You'll be me, and I'll be you."

"Finish it up," she says, laughingly. "In the words of our juvenile valentines, 'Nothing but death can part us two.'"

"Hush, hush!" and he draws her a little closer to him. "Don't keep harping upon that theme. As you said just now, even death could not part us."

"Then let us change the subject," she replies, springing to her feet. "Gerald, I want you to do something for me."

"What is it, my own?"

"There is our boat. Will you row me round the point just for this once?"

"Yes, dear. Why do you want to go there?"

She reseats herself beside him.

"You unsentimental old Gerald. Can't you guess why?"

"No, Eily."

"Then listen, sir. Do you remember anything that took place on that cliff, above the point, just this day fortnight ago?"

"Eily!"

"Do you remember now?"

"Yes, darling; it was there you said you loved me, and promised to become my wife."

"Then I want to say good-bye to you there, Gerald. You will have to leave so very early in the morning that we shall scarcely have time for a word."

"True, dear. I'll take you over there."

It is the last day of mellowing September, and the sun goes to illumine the underworld much sooner than it did when Gerald Mordan first came to Innismore. Sea and sky blend mistily into each other in the dim distance, and the setting sun looks like a great red globe hung in the firmament. The tide is coming in fast, and the long white-crested waves break against the jutting rock upon which Eily French stands whilst Gerald Mordan helps her into the boat. The wind

strikes chillily as they drift slowly across the little rock-embraced bay, and Eily draws her scarlet Connemara cloak more tightly around her as she steers the boat. Farther and farther they go oceanwards, scarcely speaking; and as Eily relaxes the ropes and Gerald Mordan rests on his oars there is no sound to be heard, save the shrill scream of a sea bird, which sounds like a wail upon the still air. Eily gives a little shudder, and says—

“Does not that sound like a human shriek—or like a banshee?”

“You foolish child! You surely don’t believe in banshees?” he says, with a smile, as he gazes fondly on her lovely face.

“Paddy Roche’s mother has heard one,” she replies evasively.

“Never mind such old women’s stories, Eily. Now take up the ropes, and whilst I row you over to the point sing me one of your wild Irish ballads.”

“I shall sing you one about a banshee,” she exclaims mischievously; and, lifting up her voice, she sings as follows:—

“ ‘ Speak low ! speak low ! the banshee is crying ;
Hark ! hark to the echo ; she’s dying !—“ She’s dying ! ”
What shadow flits dark’ning the face of the water ?
’Tis the swan of the lake—’tis the Geraldine’s daughter !

“ ‘ Hush, hush ! have you heard what the banshee said ?
Oh ! list to the echo ; she’s dead !—“ She’s dead ! ”
No shadow now dims the face of the water ;
Gone, gone, is the wraith of the Geraldine’s daughter.

“ ‘ The step of the fairies is solemn and slow—
There is wringing of hands and breathing of woe ;
What strain is that rolls over mountain and water ?
’Tis the funeral chant for the Geraldine’s daughter !

“ ‘ The requiem sounds like the plaintive moan
Which the wind makes over the sepulchre’s stone ;
“ Oh ! why did she die ? our heart’s blood hath bought her ;
Oh ! why did she die—the Geraldine’s daughter ? ”

“ ‘ The thistle-beard floats—the wild roses wave—
With the blast that sweeps over the newly made grave ;
The stars dimly twinkle, and hoarse falls the water,
While night-birds are wailing the Geraldine’s daughter.’ ”

Eily has a full, sweet contralto voice ; and she sings the foregoing words to a wild, weird, plaintive old Irish air. As the last notes die away over the dim haze-covered waters, they row into the shadow which the mountain casts over the bay.

"What a sweet wild air," says Gerald, breaking the silence. "Take care, Eily; mind where you are steering to."

"This is an awkward bit," she says, in reply to his admonition; "there are a lot of treacherous little sunken rocks about."

"I am afraid it was foolhardy of us to come across the bay so late in the evening. We must not stay long here, or the dark will have come on before we return."

"Oh! we are just at the point," she exclaims, "and I know this part of the bay well."

As she speaks, she confidently turns the boat, which is further impelled inland by the tide, until it crashes against the jutting rock, which serves for a landing place.

"I say, Eily! What a smash!"

Gerald is in some little alarm. The gloom is fast gathering; they can scarcely distinguish the wave-washed boulders from the water which splashes against them, and he knows that there are some nasty deep holes among the sunken rocks.

"Gerald! don't be a coward!" she exclaims, with a laugh.

Hardly has the girl uttered the words, when the boat comes into concussion with the sharp point of an unseen rock; there is a rebound and a lurch, and in one moment more the lovers are engulfed in the dark waters.

"My darling!" he exclaims, as she rises to the surface, and he clasps her in his arms, "don't be frightened, dear! Nothing worse than a wetting shall befall us. We are only a few yards from the land."

Gerald Mordan battles manfully against the tide, which as much impedes as it helps him on. Eily lies a dead weight in his arms, but he succeeds in coming within a few feet of the craggy landing place. Unfortunately he is at the wrong side of the rock, where the water rushes deep and dark and angry-looking, and where there is no chance of his finding foothold. But on he struggles, holding the girl in one arm, and with the other striving to make his way to the shore.

He has reached the rock at last ! He has touched it ; but a wave carries him away from it. Gerald is becoming exhausted ; and when the returning wave carries him rockwards again, he is thrown headforemost against a jutting crag. The shock overpowers him ; Eily slips from his arms ; and the hungry waters close over the heads of both.

* * * * *

"How very late Miss Eily and Mr. Mordan are," says Mrs. French, who has been uneasily walking backwards and forwards from her seat by the fire to the window. She peers through the window-pane out into the gathering gloom ; but the twilight fades, the night comes on, the dark throws its sable garment over the land, yet neither Eily nor her lover come.

"Don't be onaisy, ma'am ! Don't be onaisy," says Peggy Doran, Eily's old nurse. "Shure this is th' last evenin' Misther Mordan has wid Miss Eily, and small blame t' thim t' thry an' make th' most av it."

Mrs. French smiles sadly, and her thoughts go back to a time when she, too, had strayed along the same beach, her hand in her lover's. Old memories crowd upon her mind; for her, the leaves of memory seem to make a sad rustling as she sits there in the half-darkness, with only the flickering firelight for a companion. So engrossed is she with her thoughts, that she seems to wake up with a start as the sound of footsteps is heard upon the gravel outside. Hastily rising, she says—

“At last—here they are.”

There is a light in the hall, and Mrs. French proceeds to open the door, saying as she does so—

“Ah! truants! So you have condescended to come home at last? I have been quite uneasy about you.”

Paddy Roche is at the door as it is opened. There is a horrified look upon his face, an expression which sends a chill through the heart of the mother.

“What is the matter, Paddy?” she asks

faintly, as she leans against the door. “Is there anything the matter?” she repeats.

“Oh! the Lord save uz an’ keep us, ma’am, jewil. Shure its th’ terrible thrubble intirely that’s th’ matther!”

“Has anything happened to Miss Eily?” she exclaims. “Good heavens! what is that?” she continues, as several men now approach the hall door bearing the apparently lifeless body of Gerald Mordan.

“Eily! Eily! Eily!” she shrieks in an agony; “my child! where is she?”

The servants have now all gathered around, and supplement the crowd from the village. There is no answer to the inquiry of the agonised mother, who shrieks wildly—

“She has been drowned! She has been drowned! If not, why don’t you speak and tell me where she is?”

She fiercely shakes Paddy Roche as she speaks. The poor man does not know what to say.

“The nabors is lookin’ for Miss Eily, ma’am,” is all he can reply, as he steps aside

to make way for those who are carrying in the body of Gerald Mordan.

Out into the night rushes the distracted mother, followed by a number of her humble but sympathetic neighbours. They take her to the place where Gerald Mordan's body was found washed up on to the beach. A little crowd has gathered, and there by the dim light of a fisherman's lantern, the mother beholds the dead body of her darling daughter.

"She cannot be dead," she says, in a strangely quiet tone, and with white quivering lips—"Take her home, Peggy. Let us take her home and put her to bed."

So all that remains of sweet Eily French is taken home and laid upon the little white bed. Every means is used to try and restore her, but without effect. Her spirit has gone to its rest until "The sea gives up its dead."

Not so with Gerald Mordan. Almost hopeless had seemed their efforts at first, but at length they were crowned with success. He lived, but he did not speak; neither did he seem to recognize any one. He never inquired

for Eily, but lay in a stolid stupor, caused by his having received a slight concussion of the brain, where his head struck against the rock.

For many a day he lies helpless at Innismore Lodge, where Mrs. French tends him like a mother. At length he speaks, and his first coherent words are—

"Where is Eily?"

The question has come so suddenly after these weeks of silence, broken only by incoherent mutterings, that the mother's answer is a wild burst of tears.

Instinctively he seems to know that Eily is lost to him for ever. He asks nothing more, but repeats wearily to himself—

"She told a lie. She said that death even could not part us—that she would be sure to come back to me."

Gerald Mordan is soon able to be up and to wander along the beach; but mentally or physically he does not gather strength. The shock of that awful night when he lost his darling, combined with the accident to his head, have been almost too much for his

excited brain, and his mind has not yet recovered its wonted equilibrium. He makes no mention of leaving Innismore Lodge, and Mrs. French, who has communicated with his friends, begs of them to leave him with her in her loneliness. She scarcely lets him out of her sight, and the two might often be seen seated on the jutting rock where lovely Eily French met with her death. The place seems to have a fascination for him. He sits gazing idly into the waters which seethe and eddy, and curl below, often chanting a verse of a song which his love had often sung to him:—

“ We shall walk no more through the sodden plain,
With the faded bents o’erspread ;
We shall stand no more by the seething main
While the dark wrack drives o’erhead.
We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,
Where the last farewell was said ;
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
‘ When the sea gives up its dead.’ ”

The weather is bitterly cold, for December has come, yet Gerald Mordan will not forego his accustomed visit to the rock by the sea. He is fretful and almost childish, and Mrs.



French does not like to deny him what seems to him to be his only object in life now. So she wraps herself up warmly, and they set off in the bleak, raw December afternoon. The noisy sea birds are screaming, and the Atlantic is dashing angrily against the cliffs, as Gerald Mordan, apparently oblivious to the piercing cold, seats himself upon his accustomed rock, and croons Eily's song.

Presently a footstep on the shingle causes both to turn round. Has the sea given up its dead? for

There stands Eily!

CHAPTER III.

EILY!

Eily standing there, lithe and graceful, with her rosy lips half-parted, her face flushed, an eager, questioning look in her lustrous eyes, beaming with health and youth. No dripping, pale, drenched wraith with water-stained garments, and locks sodden and tangled with the seaweed. Not the still white figure that the mother saw laid in the coffin and committed to the family vault in Innismore. No; but a radiant beautiful girl—the Eily of the early summer.

The three look at each other in amazement. Mrs. French becomes pale as death, whilst Gerald Mordan says, in a monotonous voice—

“Eily! Eily, has come back! She said she would!”

The girl comes a step or two nearer, and timidly enquires—

"Are you Mrs. French, of Innismore Lodge?"

"Yes."

"Your husband and twin daughter were lost on the passage home from India some years ago?"

"Yes. How do you know?"

"Because"—here the girl's voice trembles, and she stretches out her arms—"Oh, mother! Do you not know your child?"

Mrs. French springs to her feet; and Gerald Mordan, his eyes dilated, and his whole frame quivering with excitement, draws nearer to her.

"My child!" she ejaculates, as she eagerly looks into the girl's face. "It is Eily, and yet not Eily."

"Yes, mother; I am your child; your twin daughter, your daughter Norah. Oh, mother! mother! Will you not believe me? Will you not take me to your heart? I have so longed for this hour!"

"I believe you, but"—and Mrs. French's lips quivered convulsively—"your father. What of him?"

“He was drowned, but I was saved.”

Mrs. French takes the girl's hand in hers, and, looking for a moment in the girl's candid eyes, she folds her in her arms, and says—

“I cannot yet comprehend it all. Come home with me. Tell me first how you found your way here?”

“Mr. Traynor—that is the solicitor who found out all about you for me—brought me to Innismore Lodge. He is there now, waiting to see you. I was told you were down here, and I could not resist coming to find you.”

In her impulsive manner she is so like the lost Eily, that Gerald Mordan, who has hitherto been stupidly looking on in wonderment, comes over beside her and takes her hand. Norah knows who he is, for she has been already told the whole sad story, so she says gently—

“Are you glad to see me?”

“You said you would come back,” he replies, looking doubtfully into her face, “and I knew you would.”

They reached the house, and there the solicitor tells the whole strange story: Captain French had been drowned, but the child had been saved by some sailors who were on their way to Malta. Captain French's body had been washed ashore, and a few letters and papers found upon it, together with a watch and chain, which the solicitor now produces, and which Mrs. French recognises as having belonged to her husband. A rich and eccentric American lady saw the little Norah, offered to take charge of her, and to restore her to her friends. Report, however, said that the mother and twin sister had also perished, therefore the American lady, who had become attached to the child, took her away with her to the United States, and there brought her up as her own child. She became passionately attached to the girl, and it was not until she was on her death bed, twelve months ago, that she told Norah her real history, and gave the letters and her father's watch and chain, into her keeping.

Norah was left an heiress, and armed with the few relics found upon her father's body, she set sail for England, to try and find if she had any relatives living. So persuaded was she that her mother and twin sister had perished that it never occurred to her to try and verify the report. From London she came to Dublin, and there, having accidentally met with some one who was acquainted with Mrs. French, the solicitor instituted inquiries, the result being that Norah could not rest until she rejoined her newly-found mother.

The girl is wonderfully like, yet singularly unlike Eily. She has the same *svelte*, graceful form, but without the wild *abandon* and unconsciousness which constituted the chief charm of the mountain-reared girl; she has the same lustrous eyes, but they have been schooled into the repression of her feelings, whereas those of Eily used to betray every thought. Norah has a profusion of raven hair, but it is decorously coiled round her pretty head, whilst Eily's used to flow "as wild as

mountain breezes.” Norah is Eily without Eily’s ingenuous manner; Eily with the polish of city life, and a knowledge of the ways of the world.

Nevertheless, the girl is loving and loveable, and lavishes treasures of affection upon her yet bewildered mother. Gerald Mordan cannot quite make out the whole affair. Here is an Eily, but not quite like his own Eily, an Eily without his Eily’s ways or loving words to him. It puzzles his poor, weak brain, as hour after hour he follows the girl with his eyes. Norah is very gentle towards him; and sometimes as she sits and tries to explain to him that she was not Eily, but Eily’s sister, he seems for a moment to comprehend what she says; but it is too much for his shattered mind. The helpless smile again overspreads his countenance, and he interrupts Norah by looking fixedly at her, and saying—

“I knew you would come back, because you said you would.”

* * * * *

The time draws near the Birth of Christ, and as day after day passes away, an alarming change is noticeable in Gerald Mordan. He gradually droops; he will not eat; he becomes more silent, and he will scarcely allow Norah out of his sight. The girl is very gentle and patient with him. From morning until night he lies on the sofa murmuring snatches of Eily's songs; and then, when his eye falls upon Norah, he invariably repeats, "I knew you would come back, because you said you would."

"Mother," says Norah one day, as she enters Mrs. French's bedroom, "I think Gerald is worse than we have any idea of."

"Why do you think so, dear?" And as Mrs. French speaks, her eyes become suffused with tears.

"He has become so much quieter, and also so very much weaker, within the past few days."

"The doctor said yesterday that he was not worse."

"I don't care what the doctor says!" ex-

claims the independent-minded little lady, who is accustomed to act and to think for herself. “I have been watching Gerald day after day, and I see him getting weaker and weaker, and more and more imbecile. Mother, I think you ought to let his friends know of his state.”

“He has no near relatives, dear; no one but an artist brother, who is studying in Rome. The friends of his to whom I wrote seem quite willing that I should keep him here.”

“And the brother, what does he say?”

“He writes most gratefully to me for what he is pleased to call my kindness to poor Gerald; and he has also enclosed money in case he should need it.”

“It is not snowing now, mother,” says Norah, looking out of the window at the white world beneath and around. “I cannot tell you how uneasy I feel about Gerald. May I go down to the village, and ask the doctor to come up and see him?”

“You can do so if you like, dear;” and in

a very few minutes the tall, black-robed figure runs lightly down the steps of Innismore Lodge, on her way to the doctor's.

It is just two days before Christmas Day, and the snow lies thickly on the ground. The earth is covered with a white mantle which has for Norah all the charm of novelty, for never in her life before has she seen snow. Her residence in the Southern States has so habituated her to sunshine that, although her quick young blood courses warmly through her veins, yet she feels the cold penetrating her through and through. She is warmly wrapped up in sables, a little sable cap surmounting her fair face and glossy piled-up tresses, and as she enters the doctor's little surgery, she finds him talking to a gentleman; the latter thinks her the loveliest girl he has ever seen.

Norah looks at the stranger in sheer consternation, for there stands Gerald Mordan; but not the Gerald Mordan she has seen but an hour ago. This Gerald has fire and intellect shining forth from his blue eyes, and

his stalwart frame indicates plenty of physical strength.

The doctor comes to the rescue.

"You are astonished, Miss French, to see this gentleman, but not more so than I was. Let me introduce to you Mr. Frank Mordan, the brother of the gentleman who is staying with you."

"I am very glad to see you," says Norah, frankly extending her hand. "Mother and I were talking about you this morning. We think Gerald is not so well, and were wishing some of his relatives or friends were here."

"I scarcely know how to thank you for your kindness to my poor brother. I should have gone to your house at once," he continues, apologetically, "but having met the doctor at the railway station, he saw my name on my luggage and made himself known to me."

"I also recognized Mr. Mordan, Miss French, from his remarkable likeness to his brother."

The doctor promises to call and see Gerald and Frank Mordan and Norah French walk along the white roads and up the gravelled sweep before the door of Innismore Lodge. Mrs. French is seated at a window working; she looks up, and her work falls from her hands as she gives a little cry, for she thinks she sees before her Gerald and Eily.

Gerald scarcely recognizes his brother, except at intervals. Frank stays at Innismore Lodge, and does all he can for the invalid. The doctor endorses Norah's opinion that he is becoming worse, and when he calls upon the afternoon of Christmas Eve, he tells Mrs. French that, in all human probability, Gerald Mordan has not many weeks to live.

The good woman weeps silently, and she decides not to tell the sad news to Frank or Norah until after the Christmas Day. They are just now looking over Gerald's sketches, and Frank is intently gazing at the last study which he had made of Eily, with the crimson handkerchief around her head and the

little shawl crossed upon her bosom. Norah also looks at it keenly for a minute, and then leaves the room.

Frank puts away the sketches and rejoins Mrs. French in the parlour, where Gerald lies passive upon a sofa drawn up by the side of the ruddy turf fire.

The evening is gathering fast, and the three are very quiet. The door is softly opened; there is a rustling of a woman's dress, and Eily, the peasant girl of the picture, with the scarlet kerchief upon her head, stands before them.

“Well,” Norah says, “do you think it a good likeness?”

Gerald raises himself to a sitting posture and looks at the three—recognition in his eyes.

“Frank! You here! And Eily?” He stretches out his arms towards her. “You said you would come back, and I knew you would.”

As he speaks a stream of blood issues from

his lips, and Gerald Mordan falls back—dead.

* * * * *

The summer-time has come again, and Norah French and Frank Mordan stand beside a flower-grown grave in the little old churchyard of Innismore. A pure white marble cross at the head of the grave bears the names of Eily French and Gerald Mordan, and the lines—

“ Beautiful and pleasant in their lives,
In death they were not divided.”

For Eily's coffin had been removed to the grave of her affianced husband. And there, hand in hand, by the side of the grave of their brother and sister, Norah French and Frank Mordan give their troth to be faithful unto each other until death shall part them.

DICK WILKIN'S ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a large family of us, and as my mother was a widow with a small income, it was a proud day when I, regarded as the fool of the family, found myself in Dublin, having in my pocket an appointment as dispensary doctor at Knockmafad. An uncle had undertaken to see me start for my destination, for though as tall as a lifeguardsman, with a beard and moustache, the envy of half my own sex and the undisguised admiration of the whole of the other, I was not deemed capable of looking after myself.

“Have you any idea where Knockmafad is?” I asked, when our greetings were over.

“Not the very least, my boy!” said my uncle; “but we’ll go down to the Custom

House and see about it. They'll send you all right."

Strange experience of the Irish mode of managing affairs. Here was I, a dispensary doctor, in search of my dispensary, going to the Custom House to be sent off like a bale of goods. I ventured to remark—

"Why do we go to the Custom House to inquire?"

"Because the poor-law office is there."

Eventually my uncle and myself set off to the Custom House, where I was introduced to Mr. Bartle, the chief conspirator in my expatriation. He was a little, sharp-looking man, who, to my dismay, informed me that I should be obliged to set off that very evening.

"But," I said diffidently, "I am not quite sure where Knockmafad is."

Mr. Bartle rubbed his hands softly one over the other, arranged the loose papers upon his table, coughed, took a pinch of snuff, and finally answered—

"You'll take the train from Broadstone to Westport, and—and—why, young gentle-

man, I presume you can then shift for yourself?"

"I declare I don't know," said my uncle, doubtfully. "Dick, my boy, do you think you shall find your way?"

"Oh, dear, yes!" I replied valiantly, "if I can only learn where the place is? It's not on the map."

"Bartle, don't you know exactly where it is?" said my uncle.

"Oh, yes! Oh, dear me, yes! It's—— Mr. Callaghan"—to a big man at a small desk in a corner—"where is this Knockmafad exactly?"

"Is it Knockmafad ye're forgetting? Why, isn't it that blessed place"——

Mr. Bartle coughed violently, and took snuff at such a rate that I, as a medical man, was about to remonstrate with him, when Mr. Callaghan continued——

"It's the place Dr. Price has just left—— somewhere in Mayo."

"Why did he leave?" I inquired.

Mr. Bartle rubbed his hands again, re-

arranged his papers, looked at Mr. Callaghan, who had twirled round on his stool and pushed his spectacles to the top of his bald head, and then answered blandly—

“It did not agree with Dr. Price. He was a nervous young fellow, and the place was lonely. That was his reason for leaving. Was it not, Mr. Callaghan?”

“Yes, yes; he was nervous. Quite so! And the place was lonely,” echoed Mr. Callaghan.

“You see, you must not expect too much society,” said Mr. Bartle, with a spasmodic attempt at facetiousness.

“Oh, I don’t mind in the least,” I replied, nonchalantly. “My profession will, no doubt, occupy me fully.”

“No one in the barony wears shoes and stockings except the priest,” remarked Mr. Callaghan. “They’re a most ignorant lot down there.”

“Ah, well,” said my uncle, cheerfully, “perhaps it’s just as well, Dick, that they don’t know too much; you’ll hold your own the better amongst them.”

Apart from the unpleasantly mysterious references to my predecessor, the prospects held out to me in the barony were not exhilarating. However, I set off, and in due time found myself at the hotel at Westport. There I proceeded to inquire of the landlord by what mode of conveyance I should continue my journey to Knockmafad.

"Shure, maybe ye're the new docthor?" he said, opening his eyes widely, and staring at me.

I answered in the affirmative.

"Thin it's all right!" exclaimed my host. "Lanty Joyce is here these three days lookin' out for you, sir."

"And who is Lanty Joyce?" I inquired.

"He was the last docthor's boy, sir; sarvint man, sir. An' he thought maybe you'd like t' take him into yer sarvice, sir."

"Well, we'll see about it. But tell me how I'm to get to Knockmafad."

"Ye'll take a car from this, sir, to the Widda M'Cree's, eighteen miles away, an' thin she'll get ye a car, or something, to take

ye over the mountains. Will I tell Lanty t' come in, sir ? ”

I intimated my willingness to see him, and presently there was ushered in a tall, shambling, shock-haired son of Erin, apparently about thirty-five. It was a broiling June day, yet he wore corduroy knee-breeches, woollen stockings, and a double-caped grey frieze overcoat, which latter garment reached to his heels. He carried a very shiny, hard-looking, low-crowned hat in one hand, and with the other seized a straggling lock of hair which wandered down over his forehead, and giving it a pull which seemed to jerk his whole huge body forward, he said huskily—

“ God save yeh kindly, sir ; ye’re welcome ! ”

“ Thank you,” I replied ; “ but surely you cannot be Lanty Joyce ? I heard he was a boy—a lad ? ”

“ Yis, sur ; I’m Lanty Joyce. I’m not a gossoon, but I’m a boy, sur.”

“ A boy ! ” I laughed. “ Why, you must be ten years older than I am, and I don’t call myself a boy.”

Lanty twirled his hat round and round, and with a shrewd twinkle in his eye, asked—

“Are yeh marrid, sur?”

“No; why?”

“Thin shure yer a boy, sur! Me father was a boy till he was forty odd. It's in the family, sur.”

“Ah, indeed. Well, so you want to enter my service?”

“Av it's plazin' t'yeh, sur. Me mother used t' wash for Docthor Price an' look afther th' house, an' I was the boy in the yard.”

“We'll see about it,” I replied. “But just settle about a car now, and have my luggage put upon it.”

Lanty obeyed; and an hour later we were driving along the bleak, mountainous sea-road, which, commanding a splendid view of the broad Atlantic, at length winds around the head of Killery Bay, then branches off to the interior of the Western Highlands. I had invited Lanty to sit beside me in order to tell me the different places we passed. He was very communicative and decidedly amusing;

yet I was not sorry when we reached the first stage of our journey, the Widow M'Cree's. Here a country low-backed car was procured, and then Lanty and I set off on the remainder of our journey.

The country through which we passed was bleak-looking, yet I could not but feel almost awed by the rugged grandeur of the scenery. We often drove for miles without meeting with a single human habitation ; and as the evening waned the mountain stillness seemed to become almost oppressive. I thought of my nervous predecessor, and said to Lanty—

“How long was Doctor Price at Knock-mafad ?”

“About four months, sur.”

“And why did he leave ?”

Lanty hesitated, and I repeated my question.

“The place was lonely, sur.”

Presently we came in sight of a ruinous-looking, grey stone mansion, half buried in trees. It was the only residence of any importance we had encountered for many

miles, and I eagerly inquired to whom it belonged.

“That’s Misther Con Blake’s, sur. He and Miss Kathleen’s away in Dublin now; but there’s yer own house, sur, jest straight fornent yeh.”

I looked in the direction indicated, and beheld a mean-looking, red-brick, one-storey house. It had a bright green hall door, flanked on either side by a window, and three windows in a row above. From one side of the house projected a small building, which unsightly excrescence I afterwards found to be the dispensary and surgery.

The interior was found, on inspection, to be not more prepossessing. Arrangements had been made for me to take my predecessor’s furniture, and I must say that I found in the house little that would have been worth his carrying away. The floors were carpetless, with the exception of a square of cocoa-nut matting in the sitting-room. The windows were curtainless. Deal tables and chairs and an iron bedstead completed the *ménage* of the dispensary doctor of Knockmafad.

CHAPTER II.

I soon found that my district stretched far and wide, but for two or three months there were few calls upon my professional skill. My office seemed almost a sinecure, a circumstance which I carefully concealed from my affectionate but unappreciative family. My time was chiefly spent in fishing in the mountain loughs, and in amusing myself by talking to Lanty Joyce, who, as I speedily discovered, was a power in the parish.

In the first place he was associated with the two principal personages in the neighbourhood—the priest and myself. He acted as parish clerk; or, in West Connaught parlance, he “sarved mass” in the little white-washed chapel. Lanty had, in the course of time, managed to learn the Latin responses; and, consequently his less gifted brethren looked upon him as a mine of erudition. It was currently reported, and implicitly be-

lieved that by virtue of his learning Lanty had the power of exorcising evil spirits.

"Fairies, I suppose you mean?" I said one day to Lanty's mother, who was proudly descanting upon the qualifications of her son.

"Is it the good people?" she exclaimed in consternation, pausing in her employment of scouring a churn—"saints above uz! Shure an' yeh don't think Lanty 'ud be the onnathral gommoch t' do anythin' agin the good people? thim that'll befrind yeh av' yeh act dacint! No—bud it's the *thivish*, an' the *pooca*, an' the *cailleach*, an' the banshee, an' all thim soart av evil sperrits that Lanty has the power agin."

"I have often heard of a banshee—what is it like?" I asked, lighting my pipe, and seating myself lazily on the garden wall.

"It's an evil sperrit that comes afther ould anschint families afore wan av thim dies. Not but what it kem afther Doctor Price, an' shure iviry wan knewn he didn't belong t' a good ould stock, for he was a Sassenach, like yerself, sur—manin' no disrespect, sur."

I became more attentive.

"Came after Dr. Price," I repeated. "Tell me the truth, now, Mrs. Joyce, was that why Dr. Price left the neighbourhood?"

"Well then, troth an' it was, sur; but yeh mustn't let on I tould yeh, sur, for we warn't t' tell yeh, for fear av freckenin' yeh."

"Oh, you need have no fear of that," I laughed; "but you have not told me what the banshee is like."

"She's like a little ould woman, sur, wid yollah hair all hangin' about her, an' a red cloak, an' she's always screechin' an' cro-naughan'. I heerd her meself, sur, many an' many a night; an' I used to lie all av a thrimble, afeard t' go asleep for fear av findin' meself dead in me bed in the mornin'."

"Dear me!" said I, gravely. "I should very much like to see this banshee. Do you think there's any chance of her paying me a visit?"

"Whisht! whisht! alannah!" exclaimed the old woman, warningly. "Don't wish for evil t' come t' yeh."

"But," I persisted, "if Lanty sleeps in the house with me, and if he has the power of chasing away the banshee, why need I be afraid?"

"I dunno," she replied, shaking her head dolefully. "Somehow or other Lanty couldn't do no good wid this banshee at all at all. The Latin, an' the poethry, an' th' jomethry he talked to it was wondherful, but still it kem an' kem, until it freckened the poor young docthor out av the parish."

"Poor fellow!" I ejaculated, rather glad to find as great a fool as myself. "Never mind, Mrs. Joyce, I promise you that if the banshee comes again, Lanty and I will soon settle it."

"No, I'm afeard not, sur. It's a banshee strange t' these parts; for the cur'os part av it is that no wan dies afther it comes."

"Evidently a banshee of a benevolent turn, and enjoying itself," I suggested; which irreverent remark caused Mrs. Joyce to cross herself devoutly, and exclaim—

"Och, docthor jewil! don't talk that-away, for it is a very powerful banshee intirely!"

I gev Lanty tay wan night med wid holy-water, an' rubbed the ind av' his nose wid a blessed candle, an' for all that he cudn't stir whin it kem screechin', and covered up his head wid the blanket."

With difficulty I controlled my laughter, and jumping off the wall, said—

"Well, Mrs. Joyce, I only hope the banshee will give me a chance of making her acquaintance."

Time passed slowly enough, and the subject of this conversation had fairly passed out of my mind. October had come, and on a fine night early in the month I retired, as was my custom, to the little surgery to smoke my nightly pipe. I opened the window, and leaned out, thinking and smoking for at least an hour. I knew Lanty had not gone to bed, for I heard him in the kitchen polishing my boots, from time to time sweetening his labours with his favourite song of "Molly Brallagan," which he sang not by any means unmusically.

Presently the song ceased. I still leaned

out of the window, my arms resting on the sill. There was no light in the room with me; but my eyes having become accustomed to the faint glimmer of the stars, I could see the outline of every out-of-door object distinctly. I heard Lanty leave the kitchen, cross the hall, and open the surgery door behind me. As he did so, a shriek, wild, weird, and unearthly, broke upon the stillness of the night. I staggered upright, and started away from the window. Shrieks, moans, wails followed each other in rapid succession; and Lanty, who was as cowardly and superstitious as he was big, clung to me helplessly, and exclaimed in terror—

“Blessed Saint Pether, Saint Patrick, an’ Saint Bridget, stan’ betchune uz an’ harm, for shure it’s the banshee herself!”

The shrieks came nearer, nearer, and at last seemed to be under the very window. A plaintive, dirge-like wail sounded almost in my ear; and looking out of the window, I saw, not more than ten yards from me, the darkly-draped figure of a woman, with a pale,

beautiful face, her eyes looking dark and cavernous in the dim light. Her waving, fair hair floated far below her waist, and she waved her long, white arms to and fro, as she turned and looked fixedly at the window where I was.

There is no use in denying that I was frightened. Yes, just as frightened as Lanty was. There stood the supernatural-looking figure, whilst

"She put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands."

I shook my companion, and whispered—

"Lanty, Lanty, can you not say anything to drive it away?"

His teeth were chattering with terror. The wild unearthly wails were renewed as the banshee moved a pace or two away. In my excitement and perturbation I seized a bottle upon a shelf beside me, and flung it at the figure. The bottle was shivered to atoms, and with a piercing shriek the banshee flitted swiftly down the road.



"Well, that bates Banagher!" ejaculated Lanty. "Faix, it's herself wint aff as fast as a sthraw fire goes out."

I acknowledge that I did not sleep that night. Each time I tried to invoke the drowsy god the shrieks of the banshee rang in my ears; the pale, beautiful face rose before my mental vision, and I was glad when the morning came. My fears vanished with the daylight; and before breakfast I went to reconnoitre the place where the banshee had been seen. There were the pieces of the broken bottle. I took one of them, and found it was labelled "Vitriol!"

"She must have been a witch, indeed," I thought, "to have withstood that;" and picking up the pieces of glass I returned to the house.

About ten o'clock that night there was a knock at the hall door—a very timid knock. Lanty went to the door, and in a minute or so returned saying—

"It's a woman, sur; she won't tell me her business, but wants t' see yerself."

“Oh! Well, send her in here to me, and then bring a light.”

Lanty withdrew, and ushered in a woman, who, as I could see by the faint light of the moon, was closely veiled and wrapped up. She approached me, threw back her veil, and revealed the pale, beautiful face of the banshee.

I gave a start, and would have uttered some exclamation, had she not laid her hand upon my arm, saying—

“Hush! I see you recognise me. Send Lanty Joyce away. Do not let him see me.”

“But who in the name of wonder are you?” I inquired.

“I am Kathleen Blake. I thought I was playing the trick upon Doctor Price. We have been so long away that I did not know he had left.”

“My gracious!” I exclaimed suddenly. “Were you burnt by the vitriol last night?”

“Yes, badly. My arm is in a shocking state; it is about it I have come.” Here she hastily pulled down her thick veil as Lanty entered with lights.

I dismissed him, and Kathleen Blake again revealed her beautiful face. She was about nineteen ; tall, slender, yet womanly, and her lips were quivering with the pain of her badly-burnt arm, which she uncovered for my inspection. I applied the remedies in silence, and then asked—

“ Why did you not send for me at once ? ”

“ Because, until about an hour ago, I was under the impression that it was Dr. Price who was here.”

“ May I ask why you have such an aversion to him ? ”

Her face flushed.

“ I wish you would not ask me,” said she, a little haughtily ; “ but,” and she hesitated, “ I have a favour to ask of you. Will you promise me not to tell any one about this accident ? My father will be home in three or four weeks : do you think you can have me quite well before then ? ”

“ I'll try. Your arm is sadly burnt.”

“ He would be so angry if he knew of my having been so very indiscreet. Will you promise ? ”

“Of course I promise,” I replied. “And now you must let me see you home.”

She did not object; and, without again encountering Lanty, we left the house. I saw her to her own door, and promised to call and see her the next morning.

Her arm rapidly became better. I called each day and dressed it, an old servant in the house alone being in the secret; but long before her father returned I was over head and ears in love with lovely Kathleen Blake.

With the winter came sickness and various kinds of hardship amongst my poorer patients; and then it was indeed that my love and respect for Kathleen Blake became deeply rooted in my heart. Many and many a comfort did her kind hands bring to wretched cabins; often did her sweet voice cheer a sufferer; and one February evening, as I accompanied her along the lonely country road, I told her of my love, and asked her to become my wife.

“I am a poor fellow,” I said, “and have little more than my love to offer you.”

She replied softly—

“That is enough for me.”

I do not exactly know in what state of beatitude the proverbially happy inhabitant of the seventh heaven is usually, but I fancy I must have been somewhere about the confines of the seventy-seventh.

A few days afterwards, as I sat with Kathleen in her old-fashioned drawing-room, she said suddenly—

“I suppose I may tell you now why I played the trick of the banshee.”

“Just as you like,” I replied.

I may here mention that, privately, I was devoured with curiosity concerning it.

“Well, then, Dr. Price took rather a fancy to me. And oh, Dick, dear! how I hated him!”

(How I pitied Dr. Price.)

“So,” she continued, “I was speaking to him one day and I discovered he was pitifully nervous. How horrible! Fancy a nervous man! So I pretended to be a banshee—first nearly drove him out of his wits, and then out of the parish. Oh, Dick, he was such a fool!”

I made no reply, but merely pulled my

beard and gazed at my darling, who laughingly exclaimed—

“But *you* were no fool, Dick! and I’m not a bit sorry now that *I* made a fool of myself.”

* * * * *

I have never told Kathleen that I was always considered the fool of the family, and I do not think she has ever discovered it. If she has done so, she has never told me, and I rejoice in the belief that she considers me the best and the wisest of men. I am not brilliant in any way, but I have made steady progress in my profession, which, I honestly confess, I consider I owe in a great measure to the cheerful, mental backing-up of my darling wife. Lanty Joyce is still a “boy,” and yet lives with us. He has, on more than one occasion, gravely told Kathleen—

“Shure the masther is iviry bit as good as a fairy-doctor! The banshee kem here wan night wid her pisherogues an’ her screechin’, an’ begorra he freckened her, an’ we nivir see her no more, the Lord be praised!”

STORY OF A DEAF MUTE.

CHAPTER I.

DEAF and dumb, and an only child ; the only living representative of the ancient and honourable house of Hallistoun. The heir to broad lands, but deaf and dumb !

It is not necessary for the purposes of this narrative that I should enter into any lengthened account of my family. The little story which I have to tell stands out boldly in my life's history from all the rest ; nevertheless, I think it well to give a brief sketch of some of the events of my earlier years. I shall, however, confine myself to the narrowest possible limits, and merely tell what may help to account for the singular way in which occurrences in my youth bore upon later circumstances.

At the age of twelve, I, Pierce Hallistoun, was a tall, healthy, handsome boy, of a wild and utterly undisciplined nature. My mother, a gay fashionable woman, had died soon after my birth; and my father, a dissolute and unprincipled gamester, who looked upon me with contempt and dislike because of my infirmity, hardly ever deigned to notice me during his flying visits to our home in the bleak north country. He was a handsome man, and well I remember that, upon one occasion, when I was a wee child, I stole up to him, and laid my hand timidly upon the silky curls of his bowed head. He looked up with a start, and an expression of hatred gleamed from his dark eyes—an expression which I never forgot—and, raising his hand, he struck me. It was the blow which severed us for ever, for I had strong passions, and from that moment I always avoided my father.

Untaught and uncared for I grew up amongst servants—good and faithful ones, fortunately for me—that is, I grew physically.

Beast-like, I ate, drank, and slept—I gloated in the sunlight and cowered in the cold—and when a day came and strange faces surrounded me, and endeavoured by signs to make known to me what I learnt months afterwards, namely, that my father was dead, and that I was the heir of Windbourne, I grew weary and impatient, and breaking from them, I rushed to the yard, and making signs to my dogs to follow me, roamed with them through the demesne, and over the windy bent-covered headlands, with a strange fear in my heart.

So long accustomed to watch the countenances of those around me, I instinctively knew, from the appearance of the grey-haired man, who had patiently and kindly tried to make me understand him, that something unusual was about to happen. Therefore, when I returned to Windbourne, late in the evening, I was hardly astonished when the old butler, who more than any one else could make himself intelligible to me, made known that I was going away with the grey-

haired gentleman. Going away from Windbourne to a place with a multitude of houses and people in it, and that he was to accompany me as my attendant.

Up to this period of my life I did not know what my own name was. I had no affections beyond a spaniel-like attachment to some of the persons surrounding me—a feeling which changed to the most deadly hatred, for the time being, if I were thwarted in the slightest degree. No one had ever tried to explain to me anything concerning God, but I distinctly recollect that, savage-like, I had an idea that there must be something or some one great and powerful, who made the things which I saw, and the beings which moved around me. These thoughts chiefly occurred to me during the awful lightning-storms to which the northern counties are subject. The heavy clouds, the vivid flashes of lightning, and the swaying trees, all powerfully impressed me with feelings of terror and awe, mingled with an idea which must have had in it the germs of reverence.



for a power which could produce such great and wonderful effects.

The grey-haired gentleman, who brought me away with him, was Mr. Stannard, my father's solicitor. He kept me in his house for nearly a year, and during the time I had two instructors. The first, a timid, gentle, painstaking old man, taught me the deaf and dumb alphabet. But one morning he did not come as usual, and I never saw him again. My second teacher was a young man of about four-and-twenty, vulgar and dissipated looking, who initiated me into the mysteries of boxing and smoking. I had not the art to conceal my newly acquired accomplishments, and so the boxing, smoking, and other mal-practices soon came to the knowledge of Mr. Stannard, who at once dismissed my tutor, and decided upon sending me to school.

But, the difficulty was, where to get a private school to which to send a deaf and dumb boy. I believe several families offered to undertake the care of my education, but

my guardian considering that the routine of a school life was a necessary discipline for me, placed me as a pupil in the Cliffside Institution for the education of the deaf and dumb, the head-master of which received me as a private pupil.

I have every reason to think that I was a smart, intelligent boy; yet, at the age of fifteen, I could do little more than write fluently and read with intelligence. The rest of my education was in a rudimentary state, owing more to my own carelessness than to any omission upon the part of my teachers.

I had, soon after my arrival at Cliffside, evinced an aptitude for drawing, a taste which had been carefully fostered by my teachers. There was a good library, to which I had free access, attached to the school, and there I read of the wondrous creations of the great forefathers of painting. One book in particular was my favourite study; it was a large volume of steel engravings of the master-pieces of great painters, with descriptive letter-press. From it I learnt to recognise

the different schools of painting. I read of the art-treasures of Italy, of the immortal works scattered here and there in picture-galleries throughout the length and breadth of Europe, and I longed to visit them, to see with my bodily eyes, what in imagination I already saw so vividly. I had grand and noble thoughts, high aspirations, vague ecstatic dreams and fantasies, and I yearned for some sympathising being to whom I could impart

“The secret longings of my soul.”

Quietly and uneventfully the years slipped away. I seemed to have no relatives—certainly none who troubled themselves about me. As I grew older, I felt the isolation the more keenly, for I longed to know something of that world of which I read. Sometimes the desire for sympathy became almost overpowering, and then I would steal away to the library, and, taking down my favourite book, dream over it until the very scenes seemed to live for me. So the time passed until I was just eighteen.

I still resided at the Cliffside school, pursuing my studies in a desultory manner. I devoted a good deal of my time to painting, and entertained serious thoughts of adopting it as a profession—not for the sake of gain, for my means were ample—but with the motive of giving myself an object in life. I communicated my idea to the head-master, and he, good easy man, conveyed to me that it was a very laudable desire, but recommended me to take pattern by him, and not to do anything in a hurry.

Dependent as I was, in a great measure, upon others, and ignorant of the ways of the world, I was, to some extent, debarred from going practically to work, and carrying out my desires. But the idea took firm possession of me, and under the guidance of the drawing-master of the institution, I laboured indefatigably to improve myself.

It was Christmas time, and the private pupils, who had homes to go to, had left for the holidays. The pupils of the Institution were busily employed in decorating their

school-room in preparation for their' annual *fête*. Many visitors from the neighbourhood attended it, and in the Institution it was generally looked forward to as being the great event of the year. Mrs. and the Misses Chesney, the doctor's wife and daughters, sometimes came to help in the decorations. I always studiously avoided them, for they were fulsome patronising women, in whose presence I never forgot that I was the heir of Windbourne. I knew they were coming on this particular day, and I was in the large schoolroom hurriedly finishing my self-imposed portion of the work—a large illuminated scroll—so as to leave before their arrival, when a shadow darkened the doorway, and looking up, I saw them enter the room.

CHAPTER II.

I PAUSED in my work, struck with incommunicable admiration of the vision of loveliness which met my astonished gaze. Beside Mrs. Chesney and her gaunt daughters, stood a young girl, tall and graceful, and about my own age, with a gentle, beautiful face, dark blue eyes, and a quantity of shining chestnut hair, which fell in natural ringlets over her sealskin jacket. Miss Chesney, who prided herself upon her knowledge of the Sign Language, introduced me to the stranger, and I learnt that she was Miss Amy Leslie. She came forward with a faint flush upon her sweet face, and in a half-hesitating manner shook hands with me. They remained during the whole of that winter afternoon, and I need hardly record that I revoked my intention of leaving.

Miss Leslie, who offered to help in my part of the decorations, was quick and sympathetic,

and ere she left I had learned that she was an enthusiastic lover of art. She had travelled a good deal, and had seen many sights of which I had only read. She also told me that her father, Colonel Leslie, had lately purchased Delville, an estate adjoining the lands of the Institution, and as we were neighbours she would, with my permission, ask her father to call upon me, and invite me to Delville to see their paintings, amongst which were several excellent copies of great Venetian and Bolognese pictures.

I need hardly say how delighted I was. Colonel Leslie, a severe-looking, elderly man, called to see me, and through the head-master gave me a formal invitation to Delville. After that he never seemed to notice me much, beyond a grim smile of greeting, and a cold shake of the hand whenever we met. But I did not feel or regret his want of affability, for it only threw me all the more into the society of Amy Leslie, who exerted all the resources of her kindly and gentle nature to entertain me.

As a natural consequence, this talented, impulsive, and beautiful girl, became the dream of my life. In social position I was quite her equal. My wealth was probably greater than that of her father. In appearance I was no unworthy representative of the high-born race from which I sprang. My talents, I had been assured, were far above mediocrity, but I was *deaf and dumb*. Each time I left her presence I recalled the cordial pressure of her little soft hand, the kindly look upon her bright expressive face, and a wild despair,

“Deep as first love, and wild with all regret,”

would take possession of my spirits, and the “tears—idle tears,” more than once flowed, as I thought of the terrible curse from which I suffered.

After the ensuing summer holidays, illness obliged the old drawing-master to resign, and his successor, who was a young man, accomplished, well-informed, and gentlemanly, soon became my most intimate friend. To him I

confided my desire to adopt painting as a profession, and asked his advice as to what course I ought to pursue. He approved of my scheme, and warmly seconded my endeavours, and when the spring-time came again, by his help and advice I was domiciled in handsome apartments in the metropolis, the old butler still remaining with me.

I daily attended the studio of an eminent artist, and rapidly improved. My chief regret at leaving Cliffside was that I should lose the chance of seeing Amy Leslie. But, being now past nineteen, I had no time to spare.

A year passed, and another spring had ripened into summer. During the interval I had heard several times of Amy Leslie, but the details were meagre. My life was a busy one, and I laboured unremittingly, but as the summer months reached their prime, I, country-born and bred, began to long for fresh air and a change of scene, but, beyond all, I was hungering for a sight of the face which had haunted me continually. So, having a standing invitation to Cliffside, I arrived

there late and unexpectedly one August evening, received a hearty welcome from many old friends, and seemed to settle into my old quarters as naturally as if I had been but a week away.

I made enquiries the next day, and learned that Colonel and Miss Leslie had but lately returned to Delville from the Continent, where they had been spending a few weeks. It was an oppressively close, sultry afternoon as I sauntered slowly along, intending to walk through the corn fields to Delville. Not a leaf was stirring in the warm summer air; the cows stood under the shade of the trees, or lazily drank the water of the clear, deep little river which separated Delville demesne from the lands of Cliffside. I had advanced to within about fifty yards of the rivulet, when, on the other side of it, and at a short distance from the brink, I saw a sight which almost paralysed me with horror.

Under the shade of an overhanging beech-tree—clad in a blue and white muslin dress, her large hat thrown carelessly beside her—



sat Amy Leslie, reading. At a short distance from her there was a small knoll clothed with pines, and beyond that again a fenced-off part of the park in which some cattle grazed. The gate leading to this enclosure had been left open, and, just as I raised my eyes, there issued from it a foaming and angry-looking bull. He approached with his head depressed, tearing up and pawing the ground with his horns and hoofs, and making straight for the place where she was sitting!

Quickly as thought could act I reviewed my position—the river lay between us, too broad to spring across, too deep to wade through, and I knew that I had not the time to spare for swimming; and there was the infuriated animal coming rapidly round the knoll. I was utterly helpless. How could I reach her or warn her? Suddenly I thought of throwing something towards her which would have the effect of making her look up, so, glancing hastily around, I picked up a large piece of sharp flinty stone, and flinging it in my agony with all my might, I struck

her. She started for a moment, looked up, and then fell against the bole of the beech-tree, whilst the bull eagerly continued his course, and passed several yards away from her.

Had I harmed her, or had she become insensible from terror? In desperation I plunged into the river at the moment when a number of men appeared in pursuit of the animal. Seeing her form lying prone at the foot of the tree, they stopped, and as I reached the spot a man had just raised her. Her sweet face was perfectly colourless, and a jagged wound upon her temple, from which the blood was slowly trickling, showed where the fury-winged stone had struck. From the looks and gesticulations of the men, I saw they had no doubt but that she had been attacked by the enraged animal. They took no notice of me, for some of them recognized me and knew I was unable to understand what they said. So I was left alone, whilst tenderly and reverently the rough hands carried the inanimate girl to Delville—my

dripping clothes hindering me from offering my services.

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That evening I was informed Miss Leslie was dead—had been attacked and killed by an infuriated bull, as she sat reading in the grounds of Delville.

CHAPTER III.

TWENTY-FIVE years have passed away since the day when I saw sweet Amy Leslie carried away insensible from the river-side at Delville, and during the time which has elapsed the name of Pierce Hallistoun, the deaf and dumb painter, has become famous. That awful day set a seal upon my life, and after the first shock of agony and mad despair was over, I devoted myself doggedly to work—hard, unflinching work, as the only means of preserving my reason.

I never imparted my secret to a human being, and it lay a ghastly load upon my soul.

My profession, of course, brought me into contact with all kinds and classes of people. One of my most intimate friends was William Barron, a stock broker of high reputation. He was some years my senior; a keen-looking, joyous-tempered man, with the head of

an Apollo set upon the shoulders of a Hercules. I often wondered what could have induced him to marry such a woman as Mrs. Barron, for she was a vapid, silly, pretty little woman, always fussily kind to me—indeed, she would have welcomed any one for the sake of the husband whom she adored.

The study of the expression of the human face, which had always been a source of great delight to me, gave me light to see under the sunny open countenance of William Barron a cankering sorrow, and I observed that his kind, deep, grey eyes, often looked back into a past which he would fain forget, upon a something which preyed upon him, which ate his soul away secretly.

One day a fellow-artist came into my studio, and I instantly perceived from the expression of the man's face that he had some unusual and unpleasant information to communicate; so, setting aside my palette and brushes, I gave him my best attention. The news he had to tell me was, that William Barron had unexpectedly failed for an enor-

mous sum, and that the shock had overturned his reason.

I was both pained and grieved. I thought of my kindly handsome friend, who was never too much occupied to find time to entertain deaf and dumb Pierce Hallistoun. I thought of his vapid, senseless wife, who was neither fit to be a comfort and support to him in his affliction, nor a guide to his growing-up family.

The melancholy news was but too well authenticated, and after some time William Barron was obliged to be confined in a private lunatic asylum. I constantly sent to make enquiries about him, and one day, to my very great joy, word came that I would be permitted to see him, as he had taken some foolish fancy into his head about having a picture painted, and I was directed to humour him with regard to it.

I went to the asylum, and although prepared for an alteration in my friend's appearance, I had hardly expected to see that the past few months could have worked so great.

a change. He looked an old man, grey-haired, worn and haggard. To me he appeared perfectly sane, knew me, and as of old, by means of signs, he let me know that he wanted particularly to see me. At first he tried to tell me about his trouble, but, having been cautioned to avoid the topic, I led him back to the point of his wishing very much to see me. The far-away retrospective look which I have before mentioned came into his eye, and taking a pencil and a piece of paper, he wrote upon it—

“I want you to paint a picture for me of the girl that I loved in my youth, who loved me, and who was my promised wife. She was killed by a mad bull; her name was Amy Leslie. I am sure you could paint her portrait; for the reason I first liked you was because your famous picture of ‘Purity’ had Amy’s face.”

With half-incredulous eyes I looked at the words which he had written. They seemed burning into my brain! Was it possible that

the murder which I had unwittingly committed, was, in some inexplicable manner, about to be brought to light after all the weary wretched years during which I had hidden it? That was my first thought. But, mastering the emotion which trembled through every nerve of my body, I wrote—

“How can I paint her portrait when the lady is dead?”

He put his hand into his bosom and drew from it a small, well-worn morocco-covered case; opening it, he handed it to me, and there I beheld a fading but faithful likeness of sweet Amy, drawn by myself during the first months of our acquaintance. The execution was inferior, but the likeness unquestionable.

I remembered that she had asked me for the sketch, saying she wanted it for a very dear friend. A rush of old memories came over me as I gazed at the sweet face, and I was aroused from my reverie by William Barron touching me and handing me the paper upon which he had written—

“It is wonderfully like what she was—it was done by a friend of hers—an artist lad.”

Taking the paper, I wrote—

“I knew her—I am the artist lad.”

Then ensued some explanations, and had he been in a healthy state of mind, I think I should have told him the whole truth; but as he became violently excited, I was directed to leave him. So I left the asylum, carrying with me my feeble little sketch and a heart full of sad, solemn memories.

Strange! how three lives had been so interwoven!

* * * * *

Many months elapsed before I saw William Barron again, and when I did he was a hopeless imbecile. He hardly recognized me, but when I brought him to see the picture which I had painted of Amy as I had last seen her, seated beneath the beech-tree on that fatal August day, he sobbed like a little child, and a gleam of sanity came into his wandering, restless eyes.

For two years I gave myself up to him entirely, bringing him every day to visit the picture of his first love ; and when he quietly sank into the grave, his wife and children never knew the history of the past. I have taken care that his children receive the education which good William Barron would have wished.

I know they look up to me with love and reverence, and very dear to me is their companionship ; but my thoughts are oftenest with the two dead ones. And I wonder to myself whether in the hereafter I shall meet them in the realm full of song and sounds of praises, and those other miracles, hidden from me, that make the faces of men like the Madonnas of Raphael—whereof the soul seems to dwell in heaven and the body is poised, and attent, awaiting the sign to go. Who shall say ?

THE END.

